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TESTING THE TRINITY
TRADITION OR TAUGHT BY JESUS?
JAKE BRANCATELLA

Course Structure

- Course Objectives
- Qur'an's position on Trinity
- Defining the Trinity
- History of the doctrine of the Trinity
- The Divine Processions and Aseity

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Course Structure Cont.

- The Logical Problem of the Trinity
- Evaluating Models of the Trinity
- Divine Simplicity and the Trinity
- Trinity and the Fitrah
- Arguments for the Trinity
- Practical application/Dawah Simulation

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Course Objectives

- Strengthen our understanding of the Trinity
- Increase our appreciation of Tawheed
- Learn a complimentary approach in Dawah
- Practical application of knowledge from course

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The Qur'an and the Trinity

- Qur'an 3:64 "Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah ." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims."
- Call to Tawhid--The prophetic model of dawah

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The Unforgivable Sin

- Why does it matter?
- Qur'an 4:48 "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin."
- The only unforgivable sin

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Do Not Say Three!

- Qur'an 4:171 "O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, "Three"; desist - it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs."

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Do Not Say Three Cont.

- Qur'an 5:72-73 "They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary" while the Messiah has said, "O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Indeed, he who associates others with Allah – Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers. They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allah is the third of three." And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment."

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The Testimony of Christ

- Qur'an 5:116 "And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, 'Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?'" He will say, "Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen."

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Does the Qur'an Misrepresent the Trinity?

- Is the Trinity polytheism?
- History of the Logical Problem of the Trinity (LPT)
- Contemporary work on the LPT
- Social Trinitarians accused of polytheism

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Brian Leftow on Social Trinitarianism

- “Let us consider paganism further. For Christian orthodoxy, the Father ‘begets’ the Son and ‘breathes’ the Spirit. So on the functional-monotheist account, the reason the Persons are one God and the Olympians are not is that the Persons are far more alike than Zeus and his brood, far more cooperative, and linked by procession. But it is hardly plausible that Greek paganism would have been a form of monotheism had Zeus & Co. been more alike, better behaved, and linked by the right causal relations.”-Anti—Social Trinitarianism

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Mary Part of the Trinity?

- Not stated anywhere in the text
- Collyridians
- Catholic and Orthodox idolization of Mary
- Mary prayed to and called the Mother of God
- Fluid use of God and worship in the Qur'an

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The god of Atheism

- Qur'an 45:23-24 "Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allah has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allah? Then will you not be reminded? And they say, "There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.
- Do Atheists call their desire god?

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Rabbis and Monks Worshipped?

- Qur'an 9:31 "They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him."
- Do Jews and Christians call their rabbis and monks God?

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The Prophet's (saw) Tafsir of 9:31

- 'Adiyy ibn Haatim said to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "But they do not worship them." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Nay, they forbid to them that which is permissible and they permit to them that which is forbidden, and they follow them; that is how they worship them."
- Worship and God being applied to Mary does not commit us to asserting she is part of the Trinity

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Playing With the Law of God

- Qur'an 7:31-32 "Say, "Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?" Say, "They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection." Thus do We detail the verses for a people who know. Say, "My Lord has only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed - and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know."

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What is the Trinity?

- “A Trinity doctrine is commonly expressed as the statement that the one God exists as or in three equally divine “Persons”, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Every term in this statement (God, exists, as or in, equally divine, Person) has been variously understood. The guiding principle has been the creedal declaration that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of the New Testament are consubstantial (i.e. the same in substance or essence, Greek: homoousios). Because this shared substance or essence is a divine one, this is understood to imply that all three named individuals are divine, and equally so. Yet the three in some sense “are” the one God of the Bible.” Dale Tuggy, SEP Trinity Entry

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Neoplatonic Influence

- Striking parallels between Neoplatonism and Christianity
- The triad of Plotinus and the Trinity
- Clear that Platonic thought had influence on early Christian thinkers
- Genetic fallacy

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Plotinus 204-270

- Founder of Neoplatonism
- Most influential philosopher on Western thought after Plato and Aristotle
- Had a great influence on early Christian thought
- Striking similarities between Plotinus' triad and the Christian Trinity

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Plotinus' Triad

- The One, Intellect, and Soul
- Eternal emanation from the one resulting in dependency
- Plotinus refers to them as "three hypostasis"
- Same language used by Trinitarian Christians

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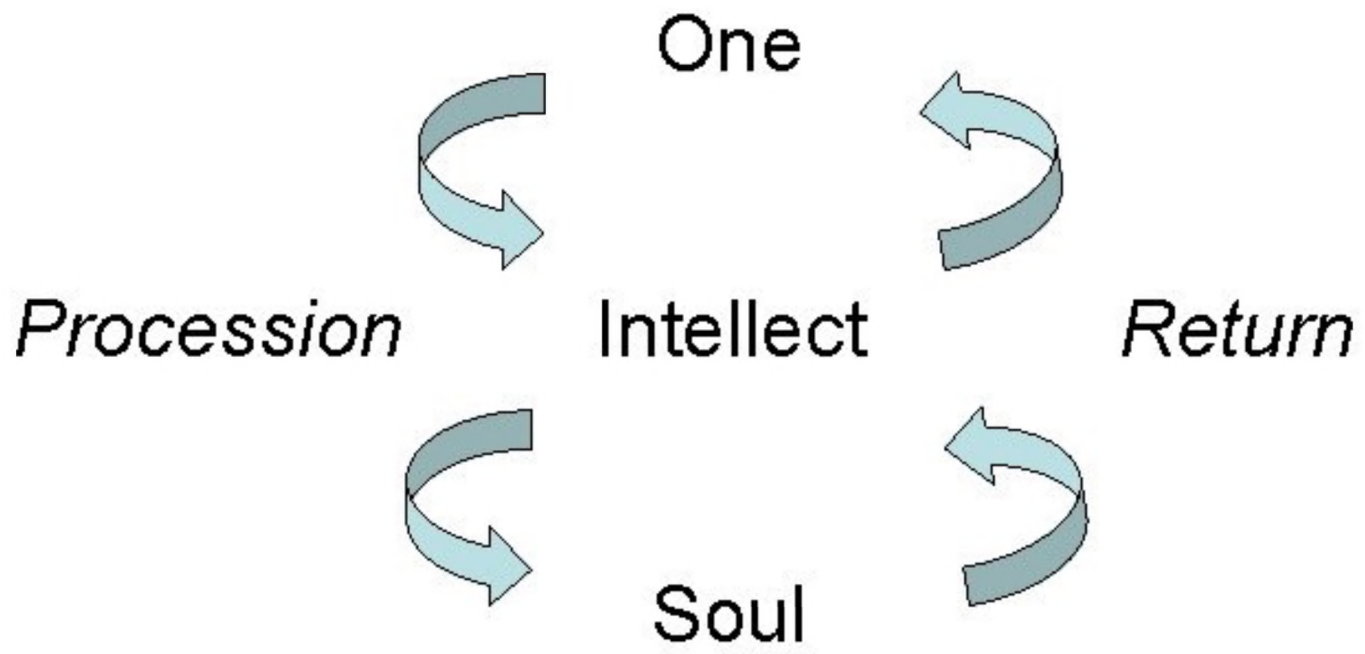
Plotinus' Triad Cont.

Centre for Neoplatonic Virtue Ethics (CNVE)

Plotinus' use of early Greek philosophers: the case of ethics

Giannis Stamatellos (Post Doc)



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Platonism and Early Christianity

- JND Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines
- “The impact of Platonism reveals itself in the thoroughgoing subordinationism which is integral to Origen’s Trinitarian scheme.”

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Clement of Alexandria 150-215

- The Stromata Book V Chapter 14
- “As a result, when [Plato] says “all things are around the king of all, and all things exist for it, and it is the cause of all beautiful things; and second around the secondary things, and third around the tertiary things” (ep. 2, 312e1–4), I for my part cannot understand these words in any other way than as revealing the Holy Trinity: third is the Holy Spirit and the Son is second, “through whom all things came to be” (John 1:3) according to the will of the Father.

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Origen of Alexandria 184-253

- Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John 1:1
- "For as the God who is over all is 'the God' and not simply 'God,' so the source of reason in each rational being is 'the Word'."
- "Everything besides the very God, which is made God by participation in his divinity, would more properly not be said to be 'the God,' but 'God."
- "The reason which is in each rational being has the same position in relation to the Word which is in the beginning with God, which is God the Word, which God the Word has with God…For both hold the place of a source; the Father, that of divinity, the Son, that of reason."

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Plotinus' Usage 204-270

- Plotinus The Enneads 5.1.8
- "And it is also because of this that we get Plato's threefold division: the things "around the king of all" —he says this, meaning the primary things — "second around the secondary things," and "third around the tertiary things." And he says there is a "father of the cause," meaning by "cause" (aition) Intellect. For the Intellect is his Demiurge. And he says that the Demiurge makes the Soul in that "mixing-bowl." And since the Intellect is cause, he means by "father" the Good, or that which transcends Intellect and "transcends Substantiality"."
- Eusebius of Caesarea uses this same passage in connection with Christian doctrine (Preparation for the Gospel XI)

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Augustine 354-430

- Augustine, Confessions VII
- “There I read, not of course in these words, but with entire the same sense and supported by numerous and varied reasons, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made. What was made is life in him; and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:1–3).”
- In City of God X comments on a passage from Porphyry “He here refers to God the Father and God the Son, Whom he calls in Greek the intellect or mind of the Father."

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Theodoret of Cyrrhus 393-458

- Cure of Greek Maladies, Commenting on Ennead 5.1 by Plotinus
- “Plotinus and Numenius claimed that [Plato] said there are three beyond time and eternal—the Good, Intellect, and the All-Soul—giving the name ‘the Good’ to the one we call Father; and ‘Intellect’ to the one we entitle ‘Son’ and ‘Word’; and calling ‘Soul’ the power that gives life to and animates all things, which the divine books entitle ‘Holy Spirit’.”

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Only one Good=God

- Mark 10:17-18 “And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.”

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Cyril of Alexandria 376-444

- In Against Julian Cyril cites the same passage from Enneads 5
- “Does he then not clearly and in the plainest terms describe the creative and life-giving operation of the Holy Spirit among us ourselves?”
- “The Greeks themselves also agree with the views of the Christians, since they set forth three primal hypostases, insist that the essence of God reaches as far as three hypostases, and sometimes even use the word ‘Trinity.’"

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Fourth Century Controversies

- We will look at key figures involved
- Key councils on both sides
- Discuss what the main theological disputes were
- What views became orthodox and why

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Eusebius of Caesarea 260-340

- Known as the Father of church history for his work Ecclesiastical History
- Follower and admirer of Origen
- Eusebius had subordinationist tendencies
- Was an early supporter of Arius
- Attended the Council of Nicaea arguing on part of the Arians
- Reluctantly signed the creedal statement
- “The Anointer, who is the Supreme God, is far superior to the Anointed, who is God in a different sense.”--Demonstrations of the Gospel 4.15

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Eusebius of Caesarea Cont.

- Difference between Father and Son
- On Ecclesiastical Theology Book 3 Chapter 6
- “But the God who is beyond all things and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, being something ineffably good and greater than any calculation and conception, any speech and consideration, of all things, however many, of whatever type they may happen to be, leading his Holy Spirit besides the only-begotten Son, rightly has alone been declared the God “who is over all and through all and in all” by the Apostle when he says, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

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Eusebius of Caesarea Cont.

- What did he believe about the Holy Spirit?
- On Ecclesiastical Theology Book 3 Chapter 6
- And he alone would be called “one God and Father” “of our Lord Jesus Christ,” while the Son would be “the only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father.” But the Counseling Spirit would be neither God nor Son, since he himself has not also received his generation from the Father as the Son has, but is one of those things brought into existence through the Son, because “all things were made through him, and without him not one thing was made.”

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Athanasius 296-373

- Bishop of Alexandria
- Attended Council of Nicaea as Bishop Alexander's secretary
- Major proponent of the creedal statement at Nicaea
- Authored several works such as On the Incarnation
- Complicated political relationship during 4th century

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Athanasius' Character

- "Athanasius, who had succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria in 328, but had been deposed and exiled after complaints that his governance had been violent. Recent historical scholarship has not been kind to Athanasius. Timothy Barnes's description is as memorable as it is brutal: 'like a modern gangster, he evoked widespread mistrust, proclaimed total innocence-and usually succeeded in evading conviction on specific charges.' There is little question that Athanasius fought dirty in theological dispute; in this, however, he was hardly alone in the fourth century; in any case, my concern is with his theology, not his character, and his theological contribution is, without question, enormous."
- The Quest for the Trinity, Stephen R. Holmes

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Council of Nicaea

- Convened by emperor Constantine I in 325
- Attempt to gain consensus on the Son's nature and relationship with the Father
- Several hundred bishops attended the council including
- Alexander, Athanasius, Arius, and Eusebius of Caesarea were some well-known figures in attendance
- Question at council: Do the Father and Son have the same essence/nature/being? Homoousion controversy
- Homoousion doctrine won out
- Doctrine affirmed, but not explained

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Creedal Formulation at Nicaea

- “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (homoousion) with the Father; by whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate…

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Creedal Formulation at Nicaea Cont

- … and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost. [But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]"

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Descent After Council of Nicaea

- Council of Tyre 335-Lead by Arians against Athanasius' conduct following Nicaea
- Emperor Constantine I found Athanasius guilty of threatening to cut off the grain supply to Constantinople from Egypt and was exiled because of this
- A series of councils held by Constantius II sought to reinstate Arianism
- Councils of Sirmium sought to establish Arianism

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Marcellus of Ancyra

- Attended the Council of Nicaea
- Affirmed a modalist understanding of Father, Son, and Spirit
- Interpreted Nicaea in a modalistic fashion
- Was an opponent of both Arianism and Trinitarianism
- Adversary of Athanasius
- Died in 374

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Third Council of Sirmium (357)

- “But since many persons are disturbed by questions concerning what is called in Latin substantia, but in Greek ousia, that is, to make it understood more exactly, as to ‘coessential,’ or what is called, ‘like-in-essence,’ there ought to be no mention of any of these at all, nor exposition of them in the Church, for this reason and for this consideration, that in divine Scripture nothing is written about them, and that they are above men’s knowledge and above men’s understanding…”

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The Cappadocian Fathers

- Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa
- Basil and Gregory of Nyssa were brothers
- 4th century church fathers instrumental in establishing Nicene Orthodoxy
- Gregory of Nazianzus–Served as President of the council of Constantinople
- Instrumental in including the Holy Spirit within the Trinity

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Gregory of Nazianzus on the Holy Spirit

- St. Gregory reports different views on the holy spirit
- Gregory of Nazianzus, Fifth Theological Oration (Oration 31)

"But of the wise men amongst ourselves, some have conceived of him as an Activity, some as a Creature, some as God; and some have been uncertain which to call Him, out of reverence for Scripture, they say, as though it did not make the matter clear either way. And therefore they neither worship Him nor treat Him with dishonour, but take up a neutral position, or rather a very miserable one, with respect to Him. And of those who consider Him to be God, some are orthodox in mind only, while others venture to be so with the lips also."

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Creed of Constantinople

- Trinity affirmed, but not explained
- "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried…

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Creed at Constantinople

- …and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

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Augustine 354-430

- Authored many works including On the Trinity
- Well-known advocate of Nicene Orthodoxy
- Used psychological analogies to explain Trinity
- Lover, Beloved, Love
- Knower, Known, Knowledge

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Augustine's Analogy of the Trinity

- Trinity in Man?
- On the Trinity Book 9 Chapter 12
- "What then is to be said of love; why, when the mind loves itself, it should not seem also to have begotten the love of itself? For it was lovable to itself even before it loved itself since it could love itself; just as it was knowable to itself even before it knew itself, since it could know itself. For if it were not knowable to itself, it never could have known itself; and so, if it were not lovable to itself, it never could have loved itself. Why therefore may it not be said by loving itself to have begotten its own love, as by knowing itself it has begotten its own knowledge?"

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Athanasian Creed

- Originally thought to be written by Athanasius
- Now widely recognized as a later writing mistakenly attribute to him
- Most likely a late fifth/early sixth century document
- Still respected today as a creed that faithfully portrays the Trinity

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Athanasian Creedal Text

- "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance."

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Status of Early Ecumenical Councils

- Dogma for Catholics and Orthodox Christians
- Most Protestants scholars will not challenge their validity
- Protestant laymen may cast them aside for their own views
- Remember to ask questions before making arguments

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Trinitarian Heresies

- Modalism/Sabellianism–Unity without distinction. 1 God existing in 3 modes
- Macedonians or Pneumatomachians—Accepted the divinity of the Son, but not of the Holy Spirit
- Tritheism—There are three Gods
- Partialism—Father, Son, and Spirit are parts of the one God
- Arianism—Denied that the Son was of the same substance as the Father and therefore not equal to him

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The Doctrine of Divine Processions

- Derived from the Nicene Creed
- "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made…And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father…"
- Considered dogma by the Church
- Accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, and most Protestants
- Believed to be derived from scripture and tradition

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The Doctrine of Divine Processions Cont.

- Known by different names
- Divine Processions
- Eternal Generation of the Son
- Son Eternally Begotten
- Eternal intra-Trinitarian relations
- These different names for the doctrine are meant to convey a similar meaning and understanding

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Motivation for the Doctrine

- Said to be derived from scripture
- Taught in the tradition of the Church
- Provides a legitimate basis for distinguishing between the persons
- Said to preserve monotheism

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Immanent Trinity vs. Economic Trinity

- Immanent Trinity—The reality of the Trinity in and of itself apart from creation
- Economic Trinity—The reality of the Trinity with respect to creation
- Economic Trinity demonstrates the roles of the persons with respect to creation
- Example: Father sends Son, Son becomes incarnate, Son sends Spirit, etc

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The Church Fathers Were Intelligent

- The doctrine of divine processions answered a difficult question
- How can we differentiate between the persons from eternity past?
- Father is unbegotten
- Son is the only-begotten
- Spirit proceeds from the Father (or Father and Son)
- More to be said about the filioque later

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Identity and Leibniz's Law

- Law of identity—First of the "three laws of thought"
- Formulation: A=A
- Identity is a relation, to be the same means to be numerically identical
- Identity is transitive: This means that if a is identical to b and b is identical to c then it follows that a is identical to c
- Identity is symmetrical: If a is identical to b then b is identical to a
- Identity is reflexive: The relation can only apply to a thing and itself. Example of myself in grammar.

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Identity and Leibniz's Law Cont.

- Identity assumes indiscernibility: This is known as Leibniz's Law or the identity of indiscernibles. Two things cannot be identical if they differ at any time or differ timelessly
- Formulation of Leibniz's Law: x and y are identical if and only if any predicate or property (p) possessed by x is also possessed by y and vice versa
- So, if two things are really the same thing then they will never differ simultaneously. If the two things in question differ simultaneously, then they are two things and not one thing
- Leibniz's Law taken as a necessary law of logic
- Not subject or context dependent
- The Church fathers assumed this law with respect to the Trinity

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Do these Laws Apply to God?

- “Logic itself does not say anything peculiar about knowledge claims, arithmetical claims, modal claims or theological claims; logic ignores the specific subject matter of those sorts of claims (be it knowledge, arithmetic, modality, or God) and treats them as it treats claims about any subject matter whatsoever. In this way, logic is said to be ‘universal’ and ‘topic-neutral’. Logic’s universality and foundational role in all of our true (closed) theories…” Jc Beall, The Contradictory Christ

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Leibniz's Law and Divine Processions

- If the differences between the persons is dependent upon creation, then it collapses the Trinity into Unitarianism without creation
- Creation is not necessary
- It would make the distinction between persons contingent
- Divine processions used to maintain the Trinity without creation

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Idiomata of the Persons

- Peculiar qualities meant to distinguish the persons
- Father—Unbegotten, begets the Son, spirates the Spirit
- Son—Begotten by the Father
- Holy Spirit–Proceeds from the Father
- Filioque—Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father AND the Son

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The Filioque Controversy

- Filoque—From Latin meaning “and the Son”
- Controversy between the Eastern and Western Churches
- Original statement in 381 creed, “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father….”
- Later insertion into the creed, “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life who proceeds from the Father and the Son….”
- Caused great division between the two churches (East and West)
- Catholics and Protestants generally accept the filioque
- Eastern Orthodox reject the filioque

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Eastern Position on the Filioque

- Photius, On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit
- "Leaving aside the aforementioned, if one admits of two causes within the thearchic and superessential triad, where then is the much hymned and God; befitting majesty of the monarchy? Will not the godlessness of polytheism be riotously introduced? Under the guise of Christianity, will not the superstition of Greek error reassert itself among those who dare to say such things? Again, if two causes are imposed upon the monarchic triad, then according to the same will proceed more vehemently into a triad, since in the supersubstantial, inseparable, and simple nature of, the divinity, the triad is more manifest than the dyad, and indeed also harmonizes with the idiomata."

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Scriptural Considerations

- Is the doctrine of divine processions Biblical?
- There doesn't seem to be clear Biblical evidence for the doctrine
- The passages often cited can be interpreted as contingent relations with respect to creation
- Monogenes from John 1:18 has been challenged as referring to the uniqueness of the Son
- John 1:18 doesn't necessitate an eternal relation

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Proverbs Chapter 8:22-23

- One of the most cited passages of the Bible amongst early church fathers
- “Passages that employ the language of “making” and “creating” with reference to the Son, the paradigmatic example being the reference to Wisdom, understood to be the preexistent Christ, in Proverbs 8:22: “He created me as the beginning of his ways for his works”…”
- Arians famously used this passage to assert that Christ is a created being

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William Lane Craig on Eternal Generation

- William Lane Craig comments on the lack of scriptural support for the doctrine of divine processions
- William Lane Craig, Is God the Son Begotten in His Divine Nature
- "The doctrine of the Father's begetting the Son in his divine nature, despite its credal affirmation, enjoys no clear scriptural support…Protestants bring all doctrinal statements, even Conciliar creeds, before the bar of Scripture. Nothing in Scripture warrants us in thinking that Christ is begotten of the Father in his divine nature…Christ's status of being monogenēs has less to do with the Trinity than with the Incarnation…"

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What Does Begotten Mean?

- Nicene Creed "And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made…"
- How did the early proponents understand the Son being eternally begotten of the Father?
- Begotten vs. Created distinction
- Being begotten is a type of eternal/atemporal causation
- Created is being caused within time or with a beginning

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Athanasius

- On the Opinion of Dionysius 15
- “The Son has His being not of Himself but of the Father”
- “So then if the Son’s existence is by nature (physei) and not from intention (ek boulēseōs), is he with the Father apart from willing and without the intention of the Father? Of course not! The Son is from the Father by will also, as he himself says, “The Father loves the Son and shows him all things” (John 5:20). For just as [the Father] did not begin to be good consequent upon [a prior] intention (ek boulēseōs), and yet is good not apart from intention and willing—for what he is, he is willingly—so also the Son’s existence, while not having its beginning consequent upon an intention, is nevertheless not apart from willing or the Father’s purpose.” Against the Arians, Discourse 3 Chapter 30

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Gregory of Nyssa

- Gregory of Nyssa Ad Petrum
- “Since, then, the Holy Spirit, from Whom all the supply of good things for creation has its source, is attached to the Son, and is inseparably apprehended with Him, and His being attached to the Father as cause, from Whom also He proceeds, He has this gnoristikon (special property) of peculiarity according to hypostasis: being known after the Son and together with the Son, and subsisting from the Father. The Son, who through Himself and with Himself reveals, the Spirit proceeding from the Father, who alone shines forth only-begottenly from the unbegotten light, has no commonality according to the individuating gnorismata, either to the Father or to the Holy Spirit, but alone is known by these mentioned signs…

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Gregory of Nyssa Cont.

- … And God over all alone has a certain special gnorisma (property) of His own hypostasis: being the Father, and subsisting from no cause, and by this sign again He is also individually recognized."
- On Not Three Gods "The principle of causality distinguishes, then, the Persons of the holy Trinity. It affirms that the one is uncaused, while the other depends on the cause."

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Gregory of Nyssa Cont.

- Against Eunomius Book 3
- “The immediate conjunction (of Father and Son) does not exclude the willing of the Father as if He had a Son without choice by some necessity of his nature. But neither does the willing separate the Son from the Father, coming in between them as a kind of interval. So we neither reject from our doctrine the willing of the Begetter in reference to the Son as if it were forced out, as it were, by the conjunction of the Son’s unity with the Father, nor do we in any way break that inseparable connection when we regard willing as involved in the generation.”

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Hilary of Poitiers 310-367

- Why is the Father greater than the Son?
- “The Father is greater than the Son: for manifestly He is greater Who makes another to be all that He Himself is, Who imparts to the Son by the mystery of the birth the image of His own unbegotten nature, Who begets Him from Himself into His own form” (On the Trinity 9.54).
- “He is not the source of His own being…it is from His [the Father's] abiding nature that the Son draws His existence through birth” (On the Trinity 9.53; 6.14; cf. 4.9).

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Gregory of Nazianzus

- Fourth Theological Oration #30
- "The evident solution is that the Greater refers to origination, while the Equal belongs to the Nature…That which is from such a Cause is not inferior to that which has no Cause; for it would share the glory of the Unoriginate, because it is from the Unoriginate"

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John Calvin 1509-1564

- Protestant reformer and author of The Institutes of the Christian Religion
- Institutes of the Christian Religion Chapter 8, “Regarded as Son, he is of the Father. His essence is without beginning, while his person has its beginning in God (the Father). And, indeed, the orthodox writers who in former times spoke of the Trinity, used this term only with reference to the Persons”.
- "Calvin allowed that the Father was the first principle, that the “Son exists from the Father,” even that “the beginning of his person is God himself” (referring to the Father). Nonetheless, he insisted that the divine person of the Son was generated from the Father and that the Son’s divine essence was not." Retrieving Eternal Generation, Chapter 10

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John Calvin Cont.

- John Calvin's 1545 letter to Neuchâtel on his position on the aseity of the Son
- “This is the state of the controversy: Whether it may be truly predicated of Christ, that he is, as he is God, a se ipso? This Chaponneau denies. Why? Because the name of Christ designates the second person in the Godhead, who stands in relation to the Father. I confess that if respect is had to the person, we ought not speak thus. But I say we are not speaking of the person but of the essence. I hold that the Holy Spirit is the true author of this manner of speaking, since he refers to Christ all the declarations in which self-existence is predicated of God, as in other passages, so in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews...

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John Calvin Cont.

- …tends that Christ, because he is of the substance of the Father, is not a se ipso, since he has a beginning from another. This I allow to him of the person. What more does he want?...I confess that the Son of God is of the Father. Accordingly, since the person has an order [ratio], I confess that he is not a se ipso. But when we are speaking of his divinity or simply of the essence (which is the same thing) apart from consideration of the person, I say that it is rightly predicated of him that he is a se ipso. For who, to this day, has denied that under the name of Jehovah there is included a declaration of aseity."

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The Father Alone is A Se

- Aseity—Existence in and of oneself as opposed to through another (ab alio)
- Not dependent upon another for one's existence
- Self-sufficiency and independence
- The doctrine of divine processions results in the Father alone being a se
- Aseity a personal property of the Father. Not of the shared nature
- The Son and Spirit are not a se. They have their existence through the Father.
- The Father is uncaused and the Son and Spirit are caused by the Father

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The Father Alone is A Se Cont.

- The Arians also believe that the Son was caused by the Father
- They argued that if the Son is caused by the Father he couldn't be equal to the Father
- How could a being that is caused be equal to one that is uncaused?
- How could Father and Son possess the same nature?

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Can God Be Dependent?

- If the Son is dependent upon the Father for his existence how can he be God?
- Is aseity a necessary attribute of God?
- Typically taken to be so in many systematic theology texts

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Aseity in the Qur'an

- Surah Ikhlas, Qur'an 112:1-4
- "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only Allah, Who is in need of none and of Whom all are in need, He neither begot anyone, nor was he begotten, Nor is there to Him any equivalent."
- "Allahu Samad"—To be As-Samad is to be the one who is independent or A Se and yet everything else is dependent upon Him
- Two words in this surah are only used once in the entire Qur'an
- Samad (A Se) and Kufuwan (Equivalent)
- There is only one being Allah, who is A Se, which makes Him without an equivalent

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Angelika Neuwirth on Surah Ikhlas

- Angelika Neuwirth, Two Faces of the Qur'ān: Qur'ān and Muṣḥaf
- "Verse 3—"He did not beget nor is he begotten"; lam yalid wa-lam yūlad—is a reverse echo of the Nicene creed; it rejects the emphatic affirmation of Christ's sonship—begotten, not made; gennêthenta, ou poiêthenta—by a no less emphatic double negation. A negative theology is established through the inversion of a locally familiar religious text. This negative theology is summed up in verse 4—"And there is none like Him"; wa-lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad. The verse that introduces a Qur'ānic hapax legomenon, kufuwun, "equal in rank," to render the core concept of homoousios, not only inverts the Nicene formula of Christ's being of one substance with God—homoousios to patri—but also forbids thinking of any being as equal in substance with God, let alone a son."

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Surah Ikhlas Refutes the Nicene Creed

Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum		Deuteronomium 6,4		Qur'ān, Sura 112 (al-Ikhlāṣ)	
We believe in one God,	Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν	Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.	שְׁמַע, יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְהוָה אֶחָד	Say: He is God, one,	قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
the **Father Almighty**, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible	Πατέρα παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.			God the absolute,	اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, **the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father** before all worlds (æons), Light of Light, very God of very God, **begotten, not made,**	Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα,			He did not beget, nor is He begotten	لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
being of one substance with the Father;	ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί·			And there is none like Him	وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

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Argument From Dependency

- If contingency arguments are successful, then they establish a being that exists necessarily in and of itself
- A dependent being cannot be necessary in and of itself
- If the Son is dependent, then he cannot be necessary in and of himself
- At best he could be necessary through another (ab alio)
- This means contingency arguments conclude with the existence of the Father alone and not the Son or Spirit

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Herman Alexander Roell 1653-1718

- Roell first post Nicene Christian theologian to reject eternal generation
- “A novel trinitarian approach first advocated by a Cartesian Reformed theologian at the turn of the eighteenth century, Herman Alexander Roell.” Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son

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Modern Protestant Minority Dissent

- Some Protestants following in line with Herman Alexander Roell also reject the doctrine of divine processions
- William Lane Craig, Ryan Mullins, etc
- They cite lack of scriptural witness for the doctrine
- Also claim the doctrine is theologically problematic
- As Protestants they don't accept creed as dogma, but bring it before the bar of scripture

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William Lane Craig on the Nicene Creed

- A Formulation and Defense of the Doctrine of the Trinity
- "For although credally affirmed, the doctrine of the generation of the Son (and the procession of the Spirit) is a relic of Logos Christology which finds virtually no warrant in the biblical text and introduces a subordinationism into the Godhead which anyone who affirms the full deity of Christ ought to find very troubling."
- "The biblical references to Christ as monogenes (Jn 1.1, 14, 18; cf. Rev 9.13) do not contemplate some pre-creation or eternal procession of the divine Son from the Father, but have to do with the historical Jesus' being God's special Son. In other words, Christ's status of being monogenes has less to do with the Trinity than with the Incarnation."

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William Lane Craig on the Nicene Creed Cont.

- "At the end of the day Basil must deny that having existence a se is not, after all, a perfection or great-making property. He asserts, "That which is from such a Cause is not inferior to that which has no Cause; for it would share the glory of the Unoriginate, because it is from the Unoriginate". This claim is unconvincing, however, for to be dependent upon the Unoriginate for one's existence is to lack a ground of being in oneself alone, which is surely less great than being able to exist on one's own…

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William Lane Craig on the Nicene Creed Cont.

- …Such derivative being is, as Leftow says, the same way in which created things exist. Despite its protestations to the contrary, Nicene orthodoxy does not seem to have completely exorcised the spirit of subordinationism introduced into Christology by the Greek Apologists. Protestants bring all doctrinal statements, even Conciliar creeds, before the bar of Scripture. Nothing in Scripture warrants us in thinking that Christ is begotten of the Father in his divine nature."

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Ryan Mullins on the Nicene Creed

- Hasker on the Divine Processions
- “One of the necessary properties for being divine is aseity. The Father is unbegotten/uncaused. The Father does not have a cause for His existence. The Father exists a se. If in order to be divine a being must exist a se, it would seem that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not divine. The Son is caused to exist by the Father. The Holy Spirit is caused to exist by the Father and the Son. The Son and the Holy Spirit have their being derived from the Father. No being that exists a se, by definition, has its existence derived from another. The Son and the Holy Spirit have their existence derived from another, and as such are not a se. The Son and the Holy Spirit lack the divine property of aseity. Since the Son and the Holy Spirit lack the property of aseity, they are not divine.”

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Ryan Mullins on the Nicene Creed Cont.

- Mullins argues that the doctrine results in subordinationism
- He also argues that it casts doubt on the homoousion doctrine

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Mullins' Definitions

- Aseity: A being exists a se if and only if its existence if not dependent upon, nor derived from, anything outside of itself.
- Self-sufficiency: A being is self-sufficient if and only if its essential nature is in no way dependent upon, nor derived from, anything outside of itself.
- Mullins claims both of these attributes are necessary for full divinity

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Mullins on Homoousion

- P1 The attributes of aseity and self-sufficiency are necessary to be God.
- P2 The Son and Spirit lack these attributes (on the divine processions)
- C Therefore, the Son and Spirit cannot be God

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Mullins on Homoousion

- P1 If the Son and Spirit lack the attributes of aseity and self-sufficiency, then they cannot have the same essence as the Father.
- P2 The Son and Spirit lack the attributes of aseity and self-sufficiency.
- C Therefore, they cannot have the same essence as the Father.

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Mullins on the Cappadocians

- This argument goes back to the Arian heretic Eunomius
- Cappadocian response: Aseity and self-sufficiency personal properties of the Father, not of the shared nature
- “Hasker explains that the Cappadocians responded by pointing out that ‘Unbegotten’ only denotes a personal property of the Father, and does not denote a property of the divine essence. This was a poor response when the Cappadocians offered it, and it is a poor response now. The argument is actually quite a bit more powerful than Hasker and many contemporary theologians realize, and it can be strengthened in several interesting ways as I shall now demonstrate.”

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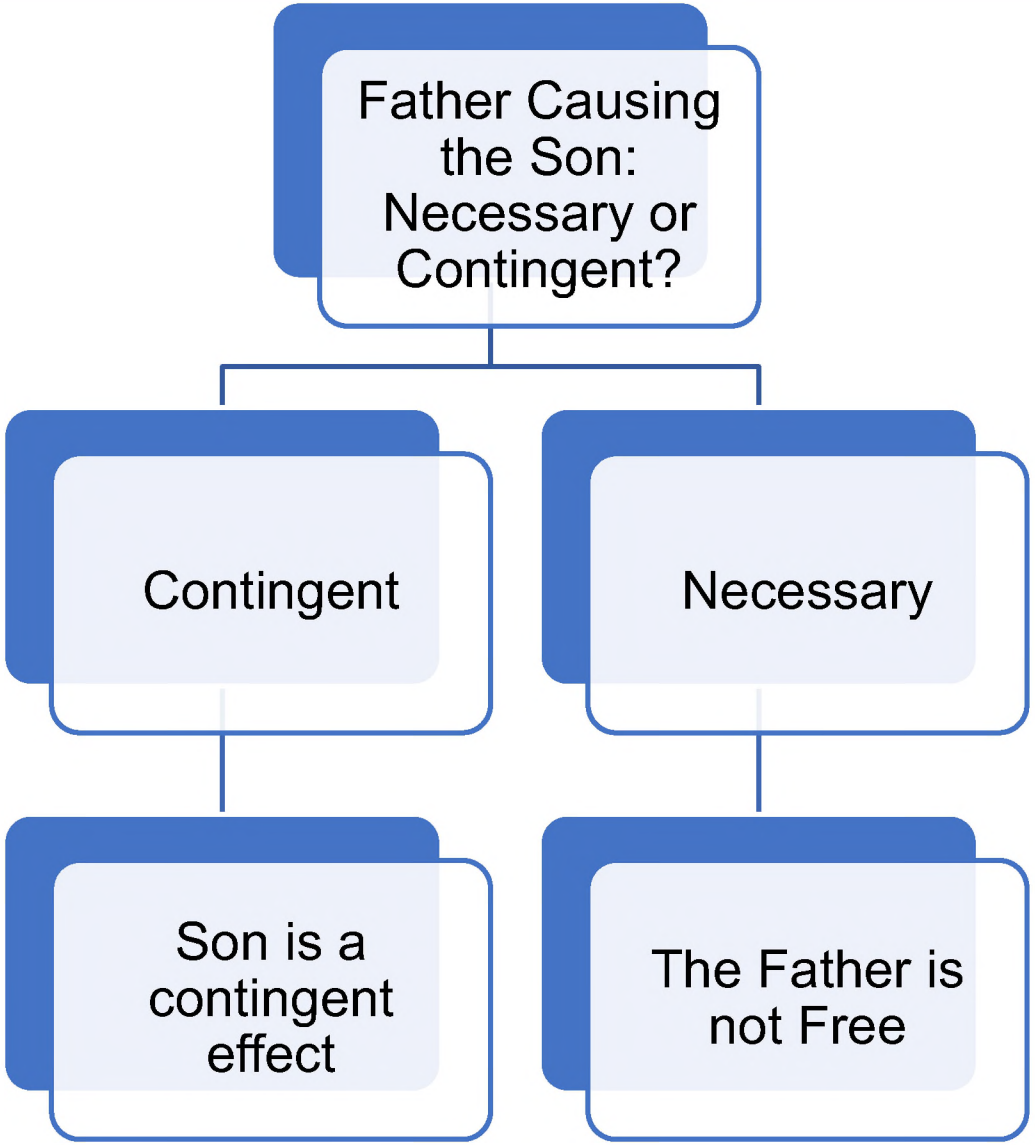
Dilemma: Father Not Free or Son Contingent?



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Dilemma: Father Not Free or Son Contingent?

- God is free by necessity
- If the Father is not free, then He cannot be God
- God exists necessarily
- If the Son exists contingently, then He cannot be God

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Monarchy of the Father

- Monarchia—Monos (one), Arche (source/principle)
- Basil Adv. Sab. 4
- “He preaches two gods! He proclaims polytheism!’ There are not two gods because there are not two fathers. Whoever introduces two first principles preaches two gods.”
- The Father alone is the source without source
- Divine processions preserve monotheism

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Thomas Aquinas on Processions and Polytheism

- Summa Theologica I.Q 33.4
- “In every genus there must be something first; so in the divine nature there must be some one principle which is not from another, and which we call "unbegotten." To admit two innascibles is to suppose the existence of two Gods, and two divine natures. Hence Hilary says (De Synod.): "As there is one God, so there cannot be two innascibles." And this especially because, did two innascibles exist, one would not be from the other, and they would not be distinguished by relative opposition: therefore they would be distinguished from each other by diversity of nature.”

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Worries for Procession Deniers

- Results in a denial of parts of the the first two ecumenical councils (Nicaea and Constantinople)
- Option not available to Catholics or Orthodox
- Historical issue for God guiding the church
- First rejected nearly 1400 years after councils

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Worries for Procession Deniers Cont.

- What idiomata are appealed to in order to avoid collapsing the persons?
- How does one avoid tri-theism?
- Cannot use the Richard “Love” Argument

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The Necessity of Idiomata

- Gregory of Nyssa, Catechetical Oration
- "For if he grants that perfection is to be entirely attributed to the subject of our discussion, and yet claims that there are many perfect beings with the same characteristics, this follows: In the case of things marked by no differences but considered to have identical attributes, it is absolutely essential for him to show the particularity (to idion) of each. Or else, if the mind cannot conceive differentiation in cases where there is no variation of distinction, he must give up the idea of distinction (diakrisin)…Indeed, because the idea of God is one and the same and no particularity (idiotētos) can reasonably be discovered in any respect, the erroneous notion of a plurality of gods must necessarily give way to the acknowledgment of a single deity."

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Gregory of Nyssa on Idiomata

- On Not Three Gods
- “If, however, any one cavils at our argument, on the ground that by not admitting the difference of nature it leads to a mixture and confusion of the Persons, we shall make to such a charge this answer — that while we confess the invariable character of the nature, we do not deny the difference in respect of cause, and that which is caused, by which alone we apprehend that one Person is distinguished from another…

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Gregory of Nyssa on Idiomata

- ...by our belief, that is, that one is the Cause, and another is of the Cause; and again in that which is of the Cause we recognize another distinction. For one is directly from the first Cause, and another by that which is directly from the first Cause; so that the attribute of being Only-begotten abides without doubt in the Son, and the interposition of the Son, while it guards His attribute of being Only-begotten, does not shut out the Spirit from His relation by way of nature to the Father."

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Clear Purpose of Processions

- "But in speaking of cause, and of the cause, we indicate the difference in manner of existence…Thus, since on the one hand the idea of cause differentiates the Persons of the Holy Trinity, declaring that one exists without a Cause, and another is of the Cause…"

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Craig's Idiomata

- Is God the Son Begotten in His Divine Nature?
- "On my model there is no danger of our lapsing, like Marcellus, into a sort of primordial Unitarianism, since I have not grounded the distinctness of the persons of the Trinity in intra-Trinitarian relations of any sort. The one spiritual being which is God possesses three distinct sets of cognitive faculties each sufficient for self-consciousness, intentionality, and volition, and so for personhood, wholly apart from the intra-Trinitarian relations. Indeed, it seems doubtful that mere relations could in any case serve as the basis for the ontological distinctness of the persons."

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Mullins on the Idiomata

- Mullins notes a few different options
- Each person has their own first-person perspective
- Persons could be individuated by a haecceity

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What is a Haecceity?

- SEP Entry: Medieval Theories of Haecceity
- "First proposed by John Duns Scotus (1266–1308), a haecceity is a non-qualitative property responsible for individuation and identity. As understood by Scotus, a haecceity is not a bare particular in the sense of something underlying qualities. It is, rather, a non-qualitative property of a substance or thing: it is a "thisness" (a haecceitas, from the Latin haec, meaning "this") as opposed to a "whatness" (a quiddita, from the Latin quid, meaning "what")."

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Cannot Use the Richard Argument

- Proposed by Richard of St. Victor and in modern times by Richard Swinburne
- Father must necessarily cause the Son and Spirit to ensure perfect divine love
- Much more detail and analysis on this argument later
- Mullins happy to reject the Richard Argument from divine love
- "Unfortunately for Hasker, the Richard Argument is incredibly unpersuasive, for it does little to establish the plausibility of the claim that perfect love must consist of three divine persons."

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The Logical Problem of the Trinity

- Philosophical and Theological Essays on the Trinity, Oxford Press pg 1
- “What theologians sometimes refer to as the “threeness–oneness problem of the Trinity,” and what philosophers call the “logical problem of the Trinity” is well-known. It arises from the conjunction of three central tenets of the doctrine: (T1) There is exactly one God. (T2) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not identical. (T3) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are consubstantial. The logical problem is that the conjunction of T1–T3 appears to be flatly inconsistent.”

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What Exactly is the Problem?

- The tri-theism problem
- Father, Son and Spirit are each fully God
- Father, Son, and Spirit are not each other
- There is only one God
- Seems to follow that there are three Gods instead of one

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Other Logical Puzzles

- Justin Mooney
- God is triune.
- The Son is not triune.
- The Son is God.

- Dale Tuggy
- The Christian God is a self.
- The Christian God is the Trinity.
- The Trinity is not a self.

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Why Does it Matter?

- At the core of Christian faith
- Fundamental disagreement between Islam and Christianity
- Dangers of falling into shirk
- Knowing who you worship
- Being able to understand and dialogue with Christians

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An Ancient Problem for the Trinity

- The problem is not new
- Not a problem introduced by Muslims or skeptics
- A problem noticed since the doctrine's inception in the 4th century
- The problem is ongoing
- Contemporary Christian philosophers seek to deal with the problem

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Gregory of Nyssa On Not Three Gods

- "To Ablabius, You that are strong with all might in the inner man ought by rights to carry on the struggle against the enemies of the truth, and not to shrink from the task, that we fathers may be gladdened by the noble toil of our sons; for this is the prompting of the law of nature: but as you turn your ranks, and send against us the assaults of those darts which are hurled by the opponents of the truth, and demand that their hot burning coals and their shafts sharpened by knowledge falsely so called should be quenched with the shield of faith by us old men…

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Gregory of Nyssa On Not Three Gods

- …, we accept your command, and make ourselves an example of obedience, in order that you may yourself give us the just requital on like commands, Ablabius, noble soldier of Christ, if we should ever summon you to such a contest. In truth, the question you propound to us is no small one, nor such that but small harm will follow if it meets with insufficient treatment. For by the force of the question, we are at first sight compelled to accept one or other of two erroneous opinions, and either to say there are three Gods, which is unlawful, or not to acknowledge the Godhead of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which is impious and absurd."

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Gregory's Reaction to the Problem

- Gregory does not question Ablabius' faith
- Encourages Ablabius for fighting against enemies of truth
- Appreciates Ablabius asking for help on this question
- Admits the question is not a small matter
- Says major harm will come without sufficient treatment of question
- Forms a dilemma: Either there are three Gods or the Trinity is false

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Gregory's Explanation of the Problem

- "The argument which you state is something like this:— Peter, James, and John, being in one human nature, are called three men: and there is no absurdity in describing those who are united in nature, if they are more than one, by the plural number of the name derived from their nature. If, then, in the above case, custom admits this, and no one forbids us to speak of those who are two as two, or those who are more than two as three, how is it that in the case of our statements of the mysteries of the Faith, though confessing the Three Persons, and acknowledging no difference of nature between them, we are in some sense at variance with our confession, when we say that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is one, and yet forbid men to say there are three Gods?"

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Gregory's Response to the Question

- "The question is, as I said, very difficult to deal with: yet, if we should be able to find anything that may give support to the uncertainty of our mind, so that it may no longer totter and waver in this monstrous dilemma, it would be well: on the other hand, even if our reasoning be found unequal to the problem, we must keep for ever, firm and unmoved, the tradition which we received by succession from the fathers, and seek from the Lord the reason which is the advocate of our faith: and if this be found by any of those endowed with grace, we must give thanks to Him who bestowed the grace; but if not, we shall none the less, on those points which have been determined, hold our faith unchangeably."

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Gregory's Response to the Question Cont.

- Admits that this is a very difficult question to deal with
- Removing uncertainty about the "monstrous dilemma" is a good thing
- Appeals to tradition from the fathers as support
- Seeking the reason from the Lord is encouraged
- Even if we cannot answer this problem we must maintain faith
- Gregory then goes on to offer a few attempted solutions to the problem

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Modern Formulations of the Problem

- Richard Cartwright details the problem in a famous paper entitled On the Logical Problem of the Trinity in 1987
- Beau Branson's Formulation (Following Cartwright)
- The Father is God
- The Son is God
- The Holy Spirit is God
- The Father is not the Son
- The Father is not the Holy Spirit
- The Son is not the Holy Spirit
- There is exactly one God

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Is of Predication vs. Is of Identity

- How could so much pivot on the word “is”?
- What does ,“The Father IS God” mean?
- It depends upon how one interprets the word is
- Does it mean that the Father is identical to God?
- Does it mean divinity is predicated of the Father?

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Is of Identity

- The Father is God utilizes an is of identity
- Examples of is of identity statements
- Jake Brancatella IS the Muslim Metaphysician
- Superman IS Clark Kent
- Imagine an = sign replacing the is of identity
- You can flip the terms on both sides and nothing changes

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What is Classical Identity?

- Characterised as the equivalence relation which everything has to itself and to nothing else and which satisfies Leibniz's Law.
- Law of identity—First of the "three laws of thought"
- Formulation: A=A
- Identity is a relation, to be the same means to be numerically identical
- Identity is transitive: This means that if a is identical to b and b is identical to c then it follows that a is identical to c
- Identity is symmetrical: If a is identical to b then b is identical to a

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What is Classical Identity? Cont.

- Identity is reflexive: The relation can only apply to a thing and itself. Example of myself in grammar.
- Identity assumes indiscernibility: This is known as Leibniz's Law or the identity of indiscernibles. Two things cannot be identical if they differ at any time or differ timelessly
- Formulation of Leibniz's Law: x and y are identical if and only if any predicate or property (p) possessed by x is also possessed by y and vice versa

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What is Classical Identity Cont.

- So, if two things are the really the same thing then they will never differ simultaneously. If the two things in question differ simultaneously then they are two things and not one thing
- Leibniz's Law taken as a necessary law of logic
- Not subject or context dependent
- The Church fathers assumed this law with respect to the Trinity

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Is of Identity Problem

- Father is identical to God
- Son is identical to God
- By classical identity it would follow that the Father is identical to the Son
- Results in modalism, which is heretical
- Maybe identity is relative?
- Common move by relative identity proponents. More on this later

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Is of Predication

- The Father is God utilizes an is of predication
- Father is a subject, which divinity is being ascribed to
- Examples: Jake is happy. This cake is divine
- An = sign is not substituted for the word is
- Common move by “Social Trinitarians”
- More on this later

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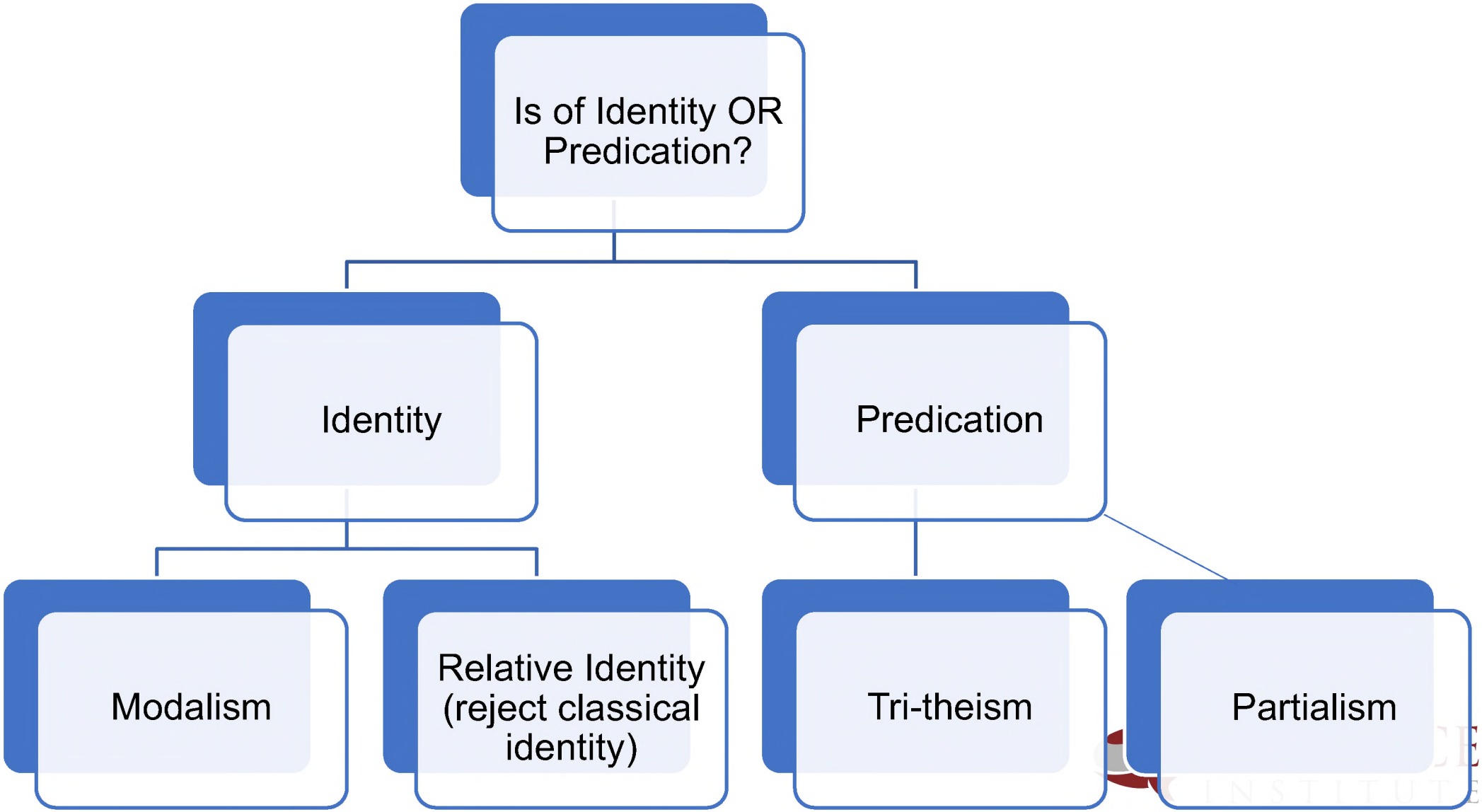
Father is God: Identity OR Predication?



Branson's Classification

- Branson's Dissertation, The Logical Problem of the Trinity
- "That leaves only 4 families of answers to the LPT, namely: 1. the Equivocation Family, 2. the NCIC Family, 3. the CTH Family, and 4. the LPT Family…So, if the orthodox Trinitarian wants to give an answer to the LPT that is both (a) non-heretical and (b) a solution to the LPT, it must fall into either: (a) the Equivocation Family, which equivocates on "is god" between P7 and P1 through P3, or (b) the NCIC Family, which counts by a relation other than classical identity."

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Branson's Classification Cont.

- CTH Family contains heretical views such as modalism
- LPT family doesn't answer the LPT
- Left with two options
- The Equivocation Family, which equivocates on "is god" between P7 and P1 through P3
- The NCIC Family, which counts by a relation other than classical identity.

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Branson's Classification Cont.

- Tuggy commenting on Branson's Classification
- "He argues that all possible non-heretical solutions to that problem either equivocate on the predicate "is God" (roughly: what are called "social" theories, discussed in sections 2.2–7) or insist that divine Persons must be counted by some relation other than "absolute" or "classical" identity (i.e. relative identity theories as discussed in section 2.1)." (SEP Trinity Entry)
- This means all non-heretical "solutions" to the LPT fall into either a type of social trinitarianism or a type of relative identity trinitarianism

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Modalism

- Father, Son, and Spirit are identical
- Three modes of the one God
- Not distinct persons of God
- Deemed heretical by the Church
- Trinitarians seek to avoid modalism
- Modern day modalists “oneness Pentecostals”
- Modalism doesn’t comport with scripture

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Modalism and Scripture

- Interpersonal relationship between Father and Son in NT
- Matthew 3:17 “And behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”
- John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
- Matthew 27:46 “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
- John 20:17 “Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’

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Relative Identity Trinitarianism

- Utilizes the is of identity
- Claims Father and Son are the same being or same God
- Claims Father and Son are not the same persons
- Two broad types of RIT: Pure vs. Impure relative identity

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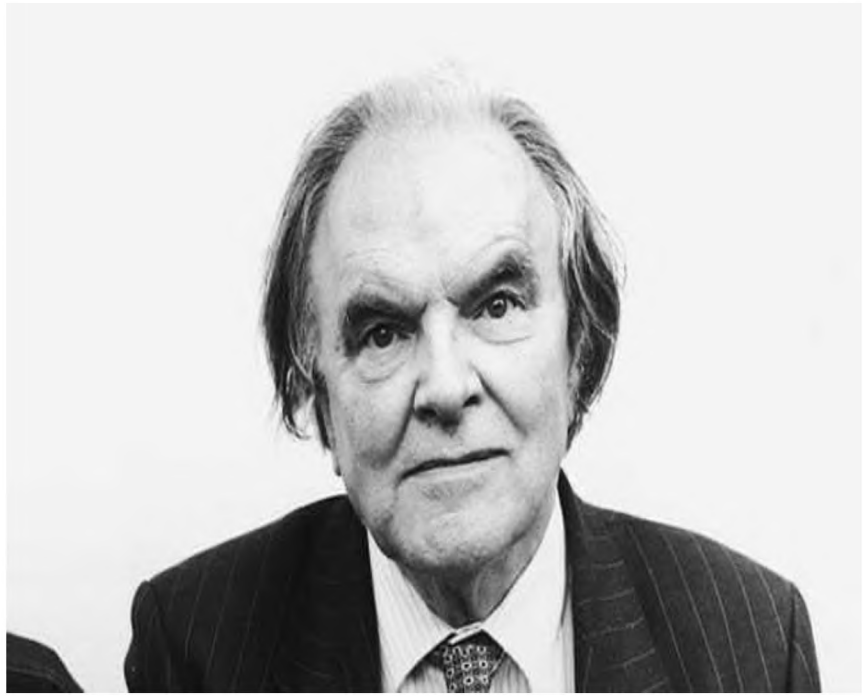
Pure Relative Identity

- Pure Relative Identity-Classical identity relation does not exist whatsoever
- Claims it is meaningless to ask whether or not two things are “the same” without a “sortal relative
- Peter Geach was a Catholic philosopher that is known as the founder of modern relative identity theories
- Much of his views were developed through his debates with the well-known philosopher William Van Orman Quine in the 1970’s



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Impure relative identity

- Impure Relative Identity—Noncommittal on whether or not classical identity is a real relation
- A proponent of impure relative identity says that with respect to things like the Trinity and Incarnation classical identity doesn't hold
- Remains agnostic on classical identity obtaining in the natural world
- Peter Van Inwagen is the most prominent defender of this view
- Most philosophers and logicians believe that classical identity is a real relation that is axiomatic

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Peter Van Inwagen on Relative Identity

- A philosopher who denies the existence of classical, absolute identity may find materials in the procedure I have outlined for an explanation of the fact that most philosophers and logicians have assumed that there is such a relation as classical identity….as far as I am able to tell, relative identity logic has no utility outside of Christian theology."

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Peter Van Inwagen on Relative Identity

- And Yet They Are Not Three Gods But One God
- “Even in this limited area of investigation, I have left the mystery of the Holy Trinity untouched. It is one thing to suggest that “is the same being as” does not dominate “is the same person as”. It is another thing to explain how this could be. I have no explanation of this fact (if it is a fact); nor do I think that we could hope to discover one in this life, in which we see only disordered reflections in a mirror. One day, perhaps, we shall see face to face and know as we are known.”

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Linguistic vs. Metaphysical Solutions to the LPT

- Functions on the level of language alone
- Just provides a coherent way of speaking about the doctrine, given certain axioms
- Doesn't provide a robust metaphysical explanation for how it could be
- Van Inwagen admits that his work doesn't explain how classical identity fails to hold when it comes to the Trinity
- No concrete examples are given for an analogy

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William Lane Craig on Relative Identity

- "The so-called Athanasian Creed enjoins Christians "to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord," If these declarations are intended to imply that statements like "The Father is God" are identity statements, then they threaten the doctrine of the Trinity with logical incoherence. For the logic of identity requires that if the Father is identical with God and the Son is identical with God, then the Father is identical with the Son, which the same Councils also deny…The fundamental problem with the appeal to Relative Identity, however, is that the very notion of Relative Identity is widely recognized to be spurious. Finally, even granted Relative Identity, its application to Trinitarian doctrine involves highly dubious assumptions…

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William Lane Craig on Relative Identity

- …For example, it must be presupposed that x and y can be the identical being without being the identical person. Notice how different this is from saying that x and y are parts of the same being but are different persons. The latter statement is like the affirmation that x and y are parts of the same body but are different hands; the former is like the affirmation that x and y are the identical body but are different hands. Van Inwagen confesses that he has no answer to the questions of how x and y can be the same being without being the same person or, more generally, how x and y can be the same N without being the same P."

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Relative Identity and the Trinity

- The Father, Son, and Spirit are the identical being, but not the identical person.
- Seems to be a standard Christian Apologetic claim
- Question for Christians: Are the Father and the Son the same God? Yes
- Are they the identical persons? No
- This commits one to relative identity theory and denies that classical identity applies to God.
- William Lane Craig does not think that the Father and the Son are the same God

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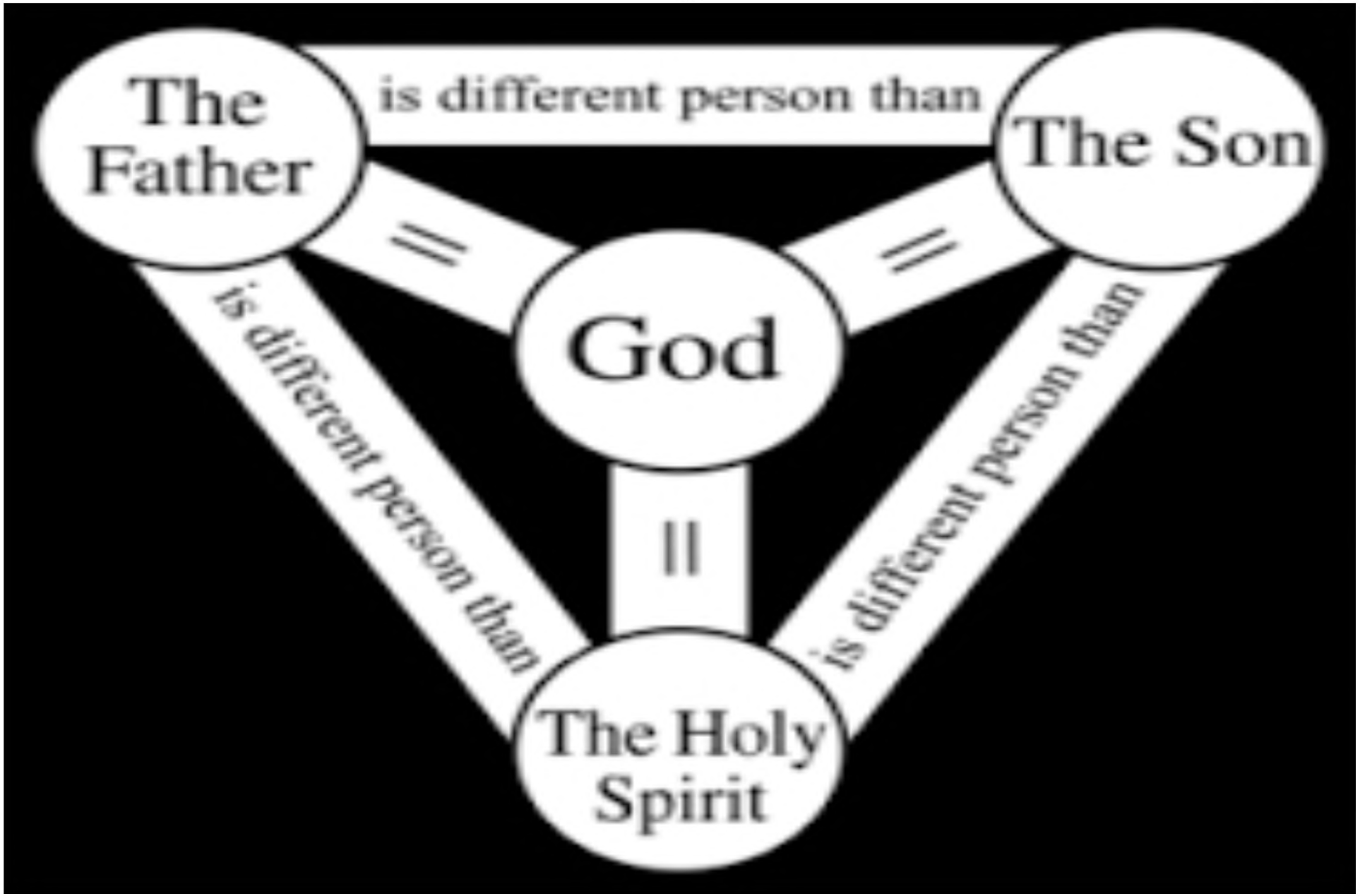
Relative Identity Trinitarianism



Trinity and Is of Predication

- Father is God utilizing is of predication
- Father is divine or Father is royal
- Is the Father fully divine? Yes
- Is the Son fully divine? Yes
- Is the Holy Spirit fully divine? Yes
- All are fully divine and are not the same divine being
- Seems we have three Gods
- Haven’t solved the LPT and back to square one

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Trinity and Is of Predication Cont.

- Father is God utilizing is of predication
- Father is divine
- Is the Father fully divine? No!
- Each of the persons are not fully divine, but are partially divine
- This move is made, attempting to avoid tri-theism
- Results in the heresy of partialism

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Trinity and Partialism

- Each one of the persons is a proper part of God
- Each one of the persons is not fully God
- Partialism is heretical
- Contradicts creed of Chalcedon that Christ is fully God and fully man
- Position was not held by any within the early church
- Proposed by modern evangelical William Lane Craig

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Creed of Chalcedon

- Fourth ecumenical council held in 451
- Focused on the natures and person of Christ
- Declared that Christ was “fully God and fully man”
- Accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, and most Protestants
- Saying that Christ is part God would contradict this council

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Fourth Lateran Council

- Held in 1215
- Authoritative for Catholics
- “We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immeasurable, almighty, unchangeable, incomprehensible and ineffable, Father, Son and holy Spirit, three persons but one absolutely simple essence, substance or nature.”
- Contradicts the simplicity of God’s nature
- Each of the persons do not possess the full divine nature

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William Lane Craig's Trinity

- The Father is God-–Is of predication
- How does Craig avoid tri-theism?
- None of the persons exemplify the divine nature
- "The Trinity" is the only instance of the divine nature
- The persons are parts of God
- Each person is divine, but not God
- Compares it to a Cerberus, a mythological three-headed dog

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Craig on Cerberus

- "Perhaps we can get a start at this question by means of an analogy…In Greco-Roman mythology there is said to stand guarding the gates of Hades a three-headed dog named Cerberus… Although the Church Fathers rejected analogies like Cerberus, once we give up divine simplicity Cerberus does seem to represent what Augustine called an image of the Trinity among creatures."
- Why compare God to a three-headed mythological creature?

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Cerberus

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Craig's Tri-theism Worry

- "Social Trinitarians typically look to the Cappadocian Fathers as their champions. As we have seen, they explain the difference between substance and hypostasis as the difference between a generic essence, say, man, and particular exemplifications of it, in this case, several men like Peter, James, and John. This leads to an obvious question: if Peter, James, and John are three men each having the same nature, then why would not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit similarly be three Gods each exemplifying the divine nature?"

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Craig's Tri-theism Worry Cont.

- "In his letter to Ablabius "On 'Not Three Gods'," Gregory of Nyssa struggled to answer this question. He emphasizes the primacy of the universal, which is one and unchangeable in each of the three men. This is merely to highlight a universal property, which Gregory holds to be one in its many exemplifications, rather than the property instance of that universal in each man. Gregory, like Plato, thinks of the universal as the primary reality. He advises that rather than speak of three Gods, we ought instead to speak of one man. But this answer solves nothing."

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Craig's Tri-theism Worry Cont.

- "Even if we think of the universal as the primary reality, still it is undeniable that there are three exemplifications of that reality who, in the one case, are three distinct men, as is obvious from the fact that one man can cease to exist without the others' ceasing to do so. Similarly, even if the one divine nature is the primary reality, still it is undeniably exemplified by three hypostaseis, who should each be an instance of deity…In order to block the inference to three Gods, Gregory also appeals to the ineffability of the divine nature and to the fact that all the operations of the Trinity toward the world involve the participation of all three persons."

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Craig's Tri-theism Worry Cont.

- "Given that there are three hypostaseis in the Godhead, distinguished according to Gregory by the intra-Trinitarian relations, then there should be three Gods. The most pressing task of contemporary Social Trinitarians is to find some more convincing answer to why, on their view, there are not three Gods."
- Craig denies each person fully exemplifies the divine nature

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Problems for Craig's Model

- Lacks historical precedence
- Cannot affirm divine simplicity
- Contradicts ecumenical councils such as Chalcedon (two natures)
- None of the persons are God
- Persons are parts of God
- All persons are divine, but not God?
- Four things are divine
- Two ways to be divine
- God is not an agent
- God in the Bible clearly is an agent

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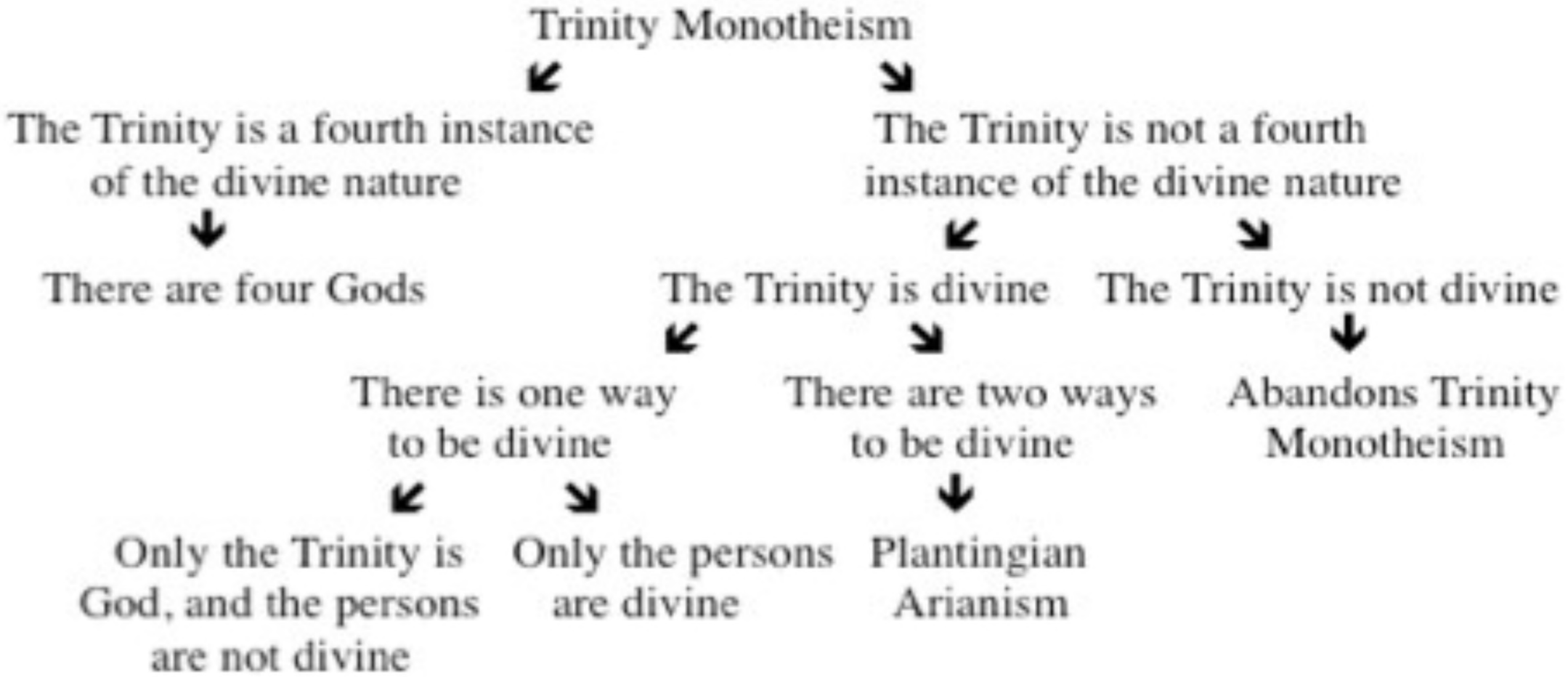
Leftow's Dilemma



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Lack of Precedence

- Craig's model is novel
- First to propose such a view
- Was God guiding the church into all truth before Craig?
- Craig's model necessarily rejects divine simplicity

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Creed of Chalcedon

- "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man…the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures…but rather the property of each nature being preserved…"
- Christ is said to have two natures in the incarnate state (divine and human nature)
- How could this be true on Craig's model if the persons do not possess the divine nature?

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Persons as Parts of God

- “This suggests that we could think of the persons of the Trinity as divine because they are parts of the Trinity, that is, parts of God. ”
- “it seems undeniable that there is some sort of part/whole relation obtaining between the persons of the Trinity and the entire Godhead.”
- Trinitarians usually want to say the persons are fully God, not parts of God.

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Is God an Agent?

- "Thus, when we ascribe omniscience and omnipotence to God, we are not making the Trinity a fourth person or agent…"
- God is "The Trinity", not an agent
- Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."
- Romans 1:19-20 "Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."
- The God of the Bible is clearly an agent

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Social Trinitarianism

- Persons are distinct centers of consciousness, each with their own proper will
- Persons are defined in a robust, modern sense of the term
- Three wills in the Trinity instead of one
- Will a property of persons and not the nature
- Utilizes an is of predication
- Each person fully God
- Difficulty in explaining how there aren't three Gods
- One God because they share the same nature or because their wills always agree
- Major proponents of ST include Swinburne, Hasker, etc

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Richard Swinburne's Tri-theism

- Could There Be More Than One God?
- "Traditionally, the first God is called "Father," the second "Son" (or "Word"), the third "Spirit." "Father" seems a name appropriate to the original source. Both "Son" and "Word" suggest a second or third God. Biblical tradition apportions both these names to Christ, and if the second person of the Trinity became incarnate, they are then appropriate names for that second person. Likewise the name of "Spirit" for the third God derives from his traditional role in sanctification."

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Brian Leftow's Anti-Social Trinitarianism

- Leftow strongly condems ST as polytheism
- "But it is not plausible that one can make Greek paganism a belief in 'not many gods, but one' by adding to it the claims that the gods are omnipotent and necessary. So on the functional-monotheist account, the reason the Persons are one God and the Olympians are not is that the Persons are far more alike than Zeus and his brood, far more cooperative, and linked by procession. But it is hardly plausible that Greek paganism would have been a form of monotheism had Zeus & Co. been more alike, better behaved, and linked by the right causal relations."

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Social Trinitarianism's Problems

- Inability to secure monotheism
- Must resort to persons being parts of God to avoid polytheism
- Describes God as a family unit instead of an individual
- 3 Minds each with their own will and yet not three Gods?
- Could be 1 billion persons with their own minds and wills and yet there would still only be one God?

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One-Self Trinity Theories

- Dale Tuggy's one-self/three-self distinction
- "A self is a being who is in principle capable of knowledge, intentional action, and interpersonal relationships."
- Are there three selves in the Trinity or one?
- Proponents of ST say three
- Psychological or Latin accounts seems to suggest one self
- Proponents include Augustine, Aquinas, etc
- Motivation is to preserve monotheism

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Aquinas' Trinity

- The persons of the Trinity are subsistent relations within the being of God
- These relations are based on the divine processions
- Only one will in the Trinity, not three
- One intellect/mind and not three
- Appeals to Augustine for precedence

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Augustine's Analogy of the Trinity

- "Now let us put aside for the moment the other things which the mind is certain about as regards itself, and just discuss these three, memory (memoria), understanding (intellegentia), and will (voluntas)…These three, then, memory, understanding, and will, are not three lives but one life, nor three minds but one mind. So it follows of course that they are not three substances but one substance…For this reason, these three are one in that they are one life, one mind, one being, and whatever else they are called together with reference to self, they are called in the singular, not in the plural. But they are three in that they have reference to each other. And if they were not equal, not only each to the other but also each to them all together, they would not of course contain each other…

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Augustine's Analogy of the Trinity

- …In fact, though they are not only each contained by each, they are all contained by each as well. After all, I remember that I have memory and understanding and will, and I understand that I understand and will and remember, and I will that I will and remember and understand, and I remember my whole memory and understanding and will all together…Therefore since they are each and all and wholly contained by each, they are each and all equal to each and all, and each and all equal to all of them together, and these three are one, one life, one mind, one being. Are we already, then, in a position to rise with all our powers of concentration to that supreme and most high being of which the human mind is the unequal image but the image nonetheless? (On the Trinity Book 10)

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Trouble for One-Self Theories

- Biblical problems
- Father and Son are two distinct selves in the NT
- A relation is not a person
- Relations are had between persons
- Problem of indexicals
- Seems like modalism

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Father and Son Two Selves in NT

- Matthew 3:17 “And behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”
- John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
- Matthew 27:46 “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
- Father and Son stand in an I/thou relationship in the NT
- Not an I/Me realtionship

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What is an Indexical?

- Indexical—"An indexical is, roughly speaking, a linguistic expression whose reference can shift from context to context. For example, the indexical 'you' may refer to one person in one context and to another person in another context. Other paradigmatic examples of indexicals are 'I', 'here', 'today', 'yesterday', 'he', 'she', and 'that'. Two speakers who utter a single sentence that contains an indexical may say different things." (SEP Indexicals Entry)
- Leftow states the problem as such: ""The Son shall become incarnate?" The Son could not learn from that that he would become incarnate unless he could also think to himself, in effect, "I am the Son, so I shall become incarnate." (Anti-Social Trinitarianism)

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Problem of Indexicals

- Examples of problematic indexicals in the Trinity
- Father cannot know, “I am the Son”
- Father cannot know, “I will become incarnate”
- Father cannot know, “I am caused by the Son”
- Son cannot know, “I am the Holy Spirit”
- Son cannot know, “I am unbegotten”
- Holy Spirit cannot know, “I am the Father”
- Holy Spirit cannot know, “I caused the Son”

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William Hasker on Indexicals

- Can a Latin Trinity Be Social?
- "Suppose, for example, both the Son and the Holy Spirit make use of the sentence-token, “I shall become incarnate.” (In this example I am supposing that the Holy Spirit will in fact become incarnate, whether on this planet or some other.) Here we have two persons using a token to express two distinct propositions, propositions that are logically contingent and also logically independent of each other. Does it not seem evident that we have here two different uses of one and the same token? Isn’t this the only plausible way to read the situation?”

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Attempts to Preserve Monotheism

- Being/person distinction
- Monarchy of the Father
- There at two broad attempts Trinitarians use in an attempt to preserve montheism
- The persons have One or the same nature
- Therefore, there is only one God
- The persons have the same will and actions
- Therefore, there is only one God

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Being/Person Distinction "Solution"

- God is one being and three persons
- What is the being?
- What is a person?
- A rock is a being, but not a person
- Are the persons parts of the one being?
- Are they identical to the being, but not to each other?
- Are they each fully God and yet there is only one God
- Not taken seriously in the philosophical literature
- Doesn't solve anything

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Monarchy of the Father

- The one God=The Father
- Who is God?
- Nominally the Father alone is God
- Son and Spirit are divine
- Are they divine in a different sense than the Father?
- If all three are divine, then you're back to tri-theism

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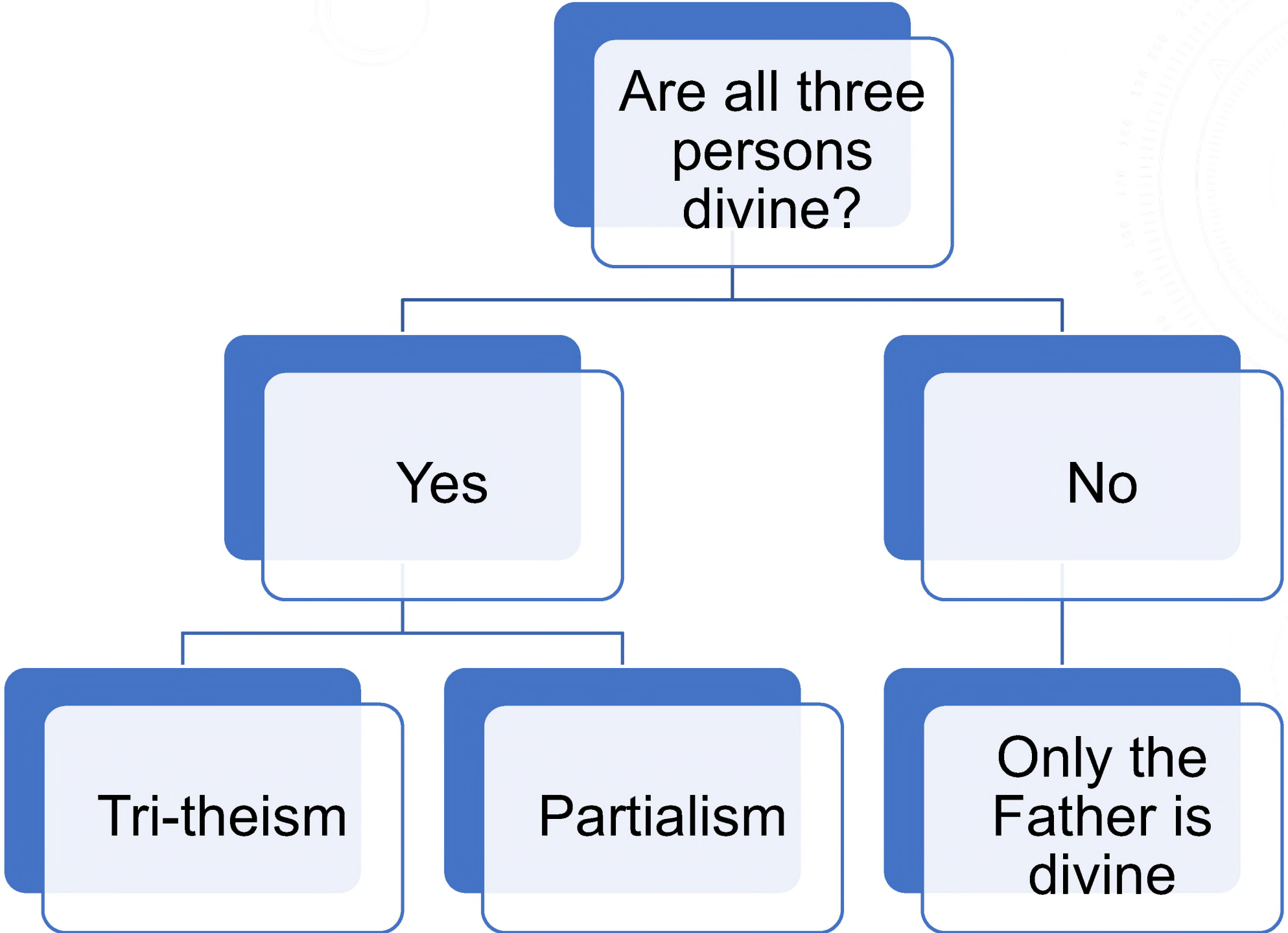
Are all three persons divine?
Yes
No
Tri-theism
Partialism
Only the Father is divine

Unity of Nature

- There is one God because there is one nature in the Trinity
- In this context I'm using the terms nature and essence interchangeably
- Each person fully possesses the divine nature
- Each person fully has what it takes to be God
- How aren't there three Gods?

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Gregory of Nyssa UNA

- “The argument which you state is something like this:— Peter, James, and John, being in one human nature, are called three men: and there is no absurdity in describing those who are united in nature, if they are more than one, by the plural number of the name derived from their nature. If, then, in the above case, custom admits this, and no one forbids us to speak of those who are two as two, or those who are more than two as three, how is it that in the case of our statements of the mysteries of the Faith, though confessing the Three Persons, and acknowledging no difference of nature between them, we are in some sense at variance with our confession, when we say that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is one, and yet forbid men to say there are three Gods?” (On Not Three Gods)

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Gregory of Nyssa UNA Cont

- “Perhaps one might seem to touch the point if he were to say (speaking offhand to straightforward people), that the definition refused to reckon Gods in any number to avoid any resemblance to the polytheism of the heathen, lest, if we too were to enumerate the Deity, not in the singular, but in the plural, as they are accustomed to do, there might be supposed to be also some community of doctrine. This answer, I say, if made to people of a more guileless spirit, might seem to be of some weight: but in the case of the others who require that one of the alternatives they propose should be established (either that we should not acknowledge the Godhead in Three Persons, or that, if we do, we should speak of those who share in the same Godhead as three), this answer is not such as to furnish any solution of the difficulty.”

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Gregory of Nyssa UNA Cont

- “For Luke is a man, or Stephen is a man; but it does not follow that if any one is a man he is therefore Luke or Stephen: but the idea of the persons admits of that separation which is made by the peculiar attributes considered in each severally, and when they are combined is presented to us by means of number; yet their nature is one, at union in itself, and an absolutely indivisible unit, not capable of increase by addition or of diminution by subtraction, but in its essence being and continually remaining one, inseparable even though it appear in plurality, continuous, complete, and not divided with the individuals who participate in it…

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Gregory of Nyssa UNA Cont

- …And as we speak of a people, or a mob, or an army, or an assembly in the singular in every case, while each of these is conceived as being in plurality, so according to the more accurate expression, man would be said to be one, even though those who are exhibited to us in the same nature make up a plurality. Thus it would be much better to correct our erroneous habit, so as no longer to extend to a plurality the name of the nature, than by our bondage to habit to transfer to our statements concerning God the error which exists in the above case."

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Richard Cartwright

- Cartwright commenting on the “solution” offered
- On the Logical Problem of the Trinity
- “It seems to have been left to Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's younger brother, to notice that, thus understood, consubstantiality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit appears to license saying that there are three Gods. Gregory himself rather desperately suggested that strictly speaking there is only one man.”

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William Lane Craig on UNA

- A Formulation and Defense of the Doctrine of the Trinity
- "As we have seen, they explain the difference between substance and hypostasis as the difference between a generic essence, say, man, and particular exemplifications of it, in this case, several men like Peter, James, and John. This leads to an obvious question: if Peter, James, and John are three men each having the same nature, then why would not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit similarly be three Gods each exemplifying the divine nature?"

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William Lane Craig on UNA Cont

- "In his letter to Ablabius "On 'Not Three Gods'," Gregory of Nyssa struggled to answer this question. He emphasizes the primacy of the universal, which is one and unchangeable in each of the three men. This is merely to highlight a universal property, which Gregory holds to be one in its many exemplifications, rather than the property instance of that universal in each man. Gregory, like Plato, thinks of the universal as the primary reality. He advises that rather than speak of three Gods, we ought instead to speak of one man. But this answer solves nothing…

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William Lane Craig on UNA Cont

- Craig not impressed with UNA
- …Even if we think of the universal as the primary reality, still it is undeniable that there are three exemplifications of that reality who, in the one case, are three distinct men, as is obvious from the fact that one man can cease to exist without the others' ceasing to do so. Similarly, even if the one divine nature is the primary reality, still it is undeniably exemplified by three hypostaseis, who should each be an instance of deity…Given that there are three hypostaseis in the Godhead, distinguished according to Gregory by the intra-Trinitarian relations, then there should be three Gods. The most pressing task of contemporary Social Trinitarians is to find some more convincing answer to why, on their view, there are not three Gods."

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UNA Conclusion

- Doesn't solve the LPT
- Fundamentally a problem with Tri-theism
- Could we have 1 billion persons in the Godhead with same nature and only one God?
- Too thin of a definition for monotheism

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Unity of Will/Action

- There is one God because there is one will in God
- There is one God because the persons never disagree
- How many wills in the Trinity?
- Will a property of persons of nature?
- One will–Same type and token actions
- Three wills—Each person has their own distinct will, but are harmonious with one another

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Three Will Model

- Claims that will is a property of persons
- One God because three persons are in harmony
- Could we have 1 billion persons in the Godhead in harmony and there be one God?
- Again, too thin of a definition for monotheism
- Is each person fully God and not each other?
- Doesn't seem to be the historical model (more on this later)

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Leftow Calls it Reformed Paganism

- Anti-Social Trinitarianism
- “Let us consider paganism further. For Christian orthodoxy, the Father ‘begets’ the Son and ‘breathes’ the Spirit. So on the functional-monotheist account, the reason the Persons are one God and the Olympians are not is that the Persons are far more alike than Zeus and his brood, far more cooperative, and linked by procession. But it is hardly plausible that Greek paganism would have been a form of monotheism had Zeus & Co. been more alike, better behaved, and linked by the right causal relations.”

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William Lane Craig on Unity of Action

- "As for the unity of will among the three divine persons, there is no reason at all to see this as constitutive of a collective substance, for three separate Gods who were each omnipotent and morally perfect would similarly act cooperatively, if Swinburne's argument against the possibility of dissension is correct. Thus, there is no salient difference between Functional Monotheism and polytheism."
- No difference between this and polytheism

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One Will Trinity Model

- There is one God because there is one will in God
- Not three wills in harmony
- One will such that the persons all perform the same type and token actions
- Type—General
- Token—Specific/particular concrete instances
- Seems to be the historical view

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Second Council of Constantinople 553

- 5th ecumenical council
- Dogma for Catholics and Orthodox
- Accepted by most Protestants
- Affirms one power/will in the Trinity
- "If anyone shall not confess that the nature or essence of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is one, as also the force and the power; [if anyone does not confess] a consubstantial Trinity, one Godhead to be worshipped in three subsistences or Persons: let him be anathema. For there is but one God even the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit in whom are all things."

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Third Council of Constantinople 681

- Declared Monothelitism heretical
- View that Christ had one will in the incarnate state
- Will a property of nature not person
- Christ had two natures entails he had two wills
- One nature in the Trinity=one will

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William Lane Craig on the Council

- William Lane Craig comments on the council and the will being a property of nature rather than person
- Monotheletism Reasonable Faith Entry
- “What the Council presupposed and what seems dubious to many is that the faculty of will belongs properly to one's nature rather than to one's person. That's why the Council thought that if Christ's human nature lacked the faculty of will, it was not a true, complete human nature. By contrast, it seems to me almost obvious that the will is a faculty of a person. It is persons who have free will and exercise it to choose this or that.”

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Athanasius One Will

- Against the Arians 3.62
- “For by the same willing by which the Son is from the Father (para tou patros), he also loves and wills and honors the Father and there is one will which is from the Father and in the Son, so that in this respect too we can contemplate the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son.”
- “Who...can resist the inference that there is one Power which orders and administers them, ordaining things well as it thinks fit?”

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Gregory of Nyssa One Will

- On Not Three Gods
- "Since then the Holy Trinity fulfils every operation in a manner similar to that of which I have spoken, not by separate action according to the number of the Persons, but so that there is one motion and disposition of the good will which is communicated from the Father through the Son to the Spirit…"

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John of Damascus One Will

- On the Orthodox Faith
- "Identity of will and of operation and of virtue and of power and of motion, that in this way I say, indivisibly, and we know to be one God."

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Augustine One Will

- “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of one majesty and virtue [power], of the same glory, and of one splendor…”

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Ambrose One Will

- “Lastly, that one may not think that there is any difference of work either in time or in order between the Father and the Son, but may believe the oneness of the same operation, He says: “The works which I do, He doeth.” [John 5:17] And again, that one may not, think that there is any difference in the distinction of the works, but may judge that the will, the working, and the power of the Father and the Son are the same, Wisdom says concerning the Father, “For whatsoever things He doeth, the Son doeth the same likewise.” [John 5:19] So that the action of neither person is before or after that of the other, but the same result of one operation.”

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Will Property of Nature or Person Possibilities Chart

Trinity (1 Nature, 3 Persons)	Will Property of Nature 1 Will	Will Property of Person 3 Wills	Will Property of Nature in Trinity 1 Will	Will Property of Person In Trinity 3 Wills
Incarnation (2 Natures, 1 Person)	2 Wills	1 Will	Will Property of Person in Incarnation 1 Will Inconsistent combination	Will Property of Nature in Incarnation 2 Wills Inconsistent combination

Critique of One Will Solution

- Why should we think one will in the Trinity entails monotheism?
- One will in the Godhead with 1 billion persons=monotheism?
- Just how radical is the one will proposal?
- What does it entail?

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Gregory of Nyssa Idiomata

- Against Eunomius Book 1
- “Apart from the notion of cause, the Holy Trinity has no discrepancy in itself whatsoever.”

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Branson on Gregory of Nyssa

- Branson's Dissertation
- "Of course, Gregory (of Nyssa) takes it to be the case that the hypostases of the Trinity not only engage in the same types of energeiai, but all the same tokens as well."
- The persons all engage in the same type and token energeiai or activities
- This includes knowledges as well

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William Lane Craig on One Will

- "The very fact that these operations originate in the Father, proceed through the Son, and are perfected by the Spirit seems to prove that there are three distinctive inseparable operations in every work of the Trinity toward creation."

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One Will and Divine Processions

- The Father causes the Son
- The Son does not cause the Father (action)
- The Son cannot cause the Father (ability)
- The Holy Spirit does not cause the Father (action)
- The Holy Spirit cannot cause the Father (ability)
- Neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit have the ability to cause another person (according to the Orthodox)
- How could they perform all of the same type and token actions if they have a difference in actions and abilities?

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One Will and the Incarnation

- The Son becomes incarnate
- The Father and Holy Spirit do not become incarnate
- How then could we say that they all perform the same type and token actions?
- Do the Father and Holy Spirit have the ability to become incarnate?

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The Son Uniquely Becomes Incarnate

- John 1:1, 14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- Philippians 2 “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”
- If these verses refer to the incarnation it seems that it was a unique act performed by the Son

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John of Damascus

- An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book 4.4
- “The Father is Father and not Son : the Son is Son and not Father: the Holy Spirit is Spirit and not Father or Son. For the individuality is unchangeable. How, indeed, could individuality continue to exist at all if it were ever changing and altering? Wherefore the Son of God became Son of Man in order that His individuality might endure. For since He was the Son of God, He became Son of Man, being made flesh of the holy Virgin and not losing the individuality of Sonship.”
- Could the Father or Holy Spirit become incarnate instead?
- Individuality continued..Not limited to the processions

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Thomas Aquinas

- Summa Theologica, Part 3.3
- “On the contrary, Whatever the Son can do, so can the Father and the Holy Ghost, otherwise the power of the three Persons would not be one. But the Son was able to become incarnate. Therefore the Father and the Holy Ghost were able to become incarnate.”
- Aquinas recognizes the worry and opts for the possibility of all persons becoming incarnate

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Problem of Indexicals

- Examples of problematic indexicals in the Trinity
- Father cannot know, “I am the Son”
- Father cannot know, “I will become incarnate”
- Father cannot know, “I am caused by the Son”
- Son cannot know, “I am the Holy Spirit”
- Son cannot know, “I am unbegotten”
- Holy Spirit cannot know, “I am the Father”
- Holy Spirit cannot know, “I caused the Son”

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William Hasker on Indexicals

- Can a Latin Trinity Be Social?
- "Suppose, for example, both the Son and the Holy Spirit make use of the sentence-token, “I shall become incarnate.” (In this example I am supposing that the Holy Spirit will in fact become incarnate, whether on this planet or some other.) Here we have two persons using a token to express two distinct propositions, propositions that are logically contingent and also logically independent of each other. Does it not seem evident that we have here two different uses of one and the same token? Isn’t this the only plausible way to read the situation?”

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Hasker on Indexicals

- Can a Latin Trinity Be Social?
- “The divine persons are aware of different propositions if they use a mental token with the indexical ‘I’ in it.” Precisely. Williams could not have told us any more clearly or explicitly that the divine persons are in different mental states as each of them makes use of the one token of the sentence “I am wise.” And indeed it must be so, if we are to explain how the persons are able to grasp and to assert propositions containing indexicals."

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Qur'anic Will Argument

- Qur'an 21:22 "Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe."
- 23:91 "Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him]."
- There would've been disorder and chaos in the universe
- They would've sought to overtake one another
- There is only one All-Mighty

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Qur'anic Will Argument Cont

- Why can't they possess the identical/same will?
- Multiple persons with the identical wills doesn't work
- With the Trinity there is order to their actions
- They do not have the same ability
- They do not have the same mental acts (problem of indexicals)

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Qur'anic Will Argument Cont

- Why can't they have three wills that always agree?
- What necessitates the agreement?
- If there isn't a necessary agreement, then the Qur'anic argument is devastating
- Williams agrees that necessary agreement is needed and that it cannot be secured with three will models
- Design arguments and arguments for a single ultimate source become doubtful

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William's Three Problems With Three Wills

- In Defense of a Latin Social Trinity: Response to William Hasker
- "Trinitarianism and Tri-theism differ in that the former secures the persons' necessary agreements (= NA) but the latter does not. Christians traditionally have rejected tri-theism, and (here I add) have done so through the seven ecumenical councils. Second, "arguments for God's existence typically aim for a conclusion that there is just one ultimate source for all created existing things, and not three separate or independent ultimate sources that just so happen to agree on creating this particular world." Third, "for many orthodox Trinitarians, there is a desire to show how a doctrine of the Trinity is consistent with, or a completion of, Jewish monotheism. It is difficult to see how a model of the Trinity is consistent with Jewish monotheism if it were not also consistent with NA."

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Williams on Three Wills Problem

- "(Swinburne gave us the example of whether the divine persons would choose to have the Earth revolve around the sun in one direction or another direction. Assuming there is no moral difference which direction the Earth revolves around the sun, there is no overriding reason to have it go one direction or another. The divine persons' choosing it to go the direction it goes is arbitrary. There are many such "permissible alternatives" in the created, contingent world.)"

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Hasker's Response

- "In the event of differing preferences the persons, recognizing the undesirability of conflicting wills, would voluntarily come to a resolution that all would accept…Would divine persons, endowed with supreme wisdom and goodness, not recognize that it would be a very bad thing for them to oppose their wills to one another? And recognizing this, would they not find an acceptable way to resolve their preferences? The answers, it seems to me, are obvious - and if so, it is not the case that proposals such as Swinburne's and mine leave NA insufficiently secured."

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Hasker's Response Cont

- "I express considerable hesitation about the possibility [of non-agreement between divine persons], though in the end I do accept it. It could be that, in view of the fact that the powers of all the persons are grounded in the one concrete divine nature they all share, in view also of the interpenetration and complete mutual awareness of the persons implied by the doctrine of perichoresis, that even this minimal form of non-agreement between the persons is impossible."

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Williams' Response to Hasker

- "I have several new things to say about Hasker's claim that his social model satisfactorily secures NA. First, the appeal to supreme wisdom and goodness as a basis for securing NA is insufficient because it assumes that wisdom and goodness would eo ipso rule out non-agreement. Why couldn't it be the case that e.g., the divine persons' non-agreement on a trivial matter that makes no moral difference to contingent creatures be a case that is analogous to a beautiful song in which there is initial non-agreement or discord that gets resolved? Each divine person would be like an actor and knower of beautiful divine art - in this case, beautiful negotiations."

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Williams' Response to Hasker Cont

- "On this construal, the divine persons are like postmodern artists whose aesthetic values are such that beauty requires discord that strives for resolution. Perhaps the divine persons' supreme goodness in conjunction with this aesthetic value not only is consistent with non-agreement on trivial matters, but requires it. Hasker needs to clarify why he thinks it is the case that divine goodness and wisdom must secure NA. Moreover, if the persons do not initially agree about a case of "permissible alternatives," then there is no NA. Alluding to Arius, there is a time when there is no NA. Or, to use John Duns Scotus's language, there is an instant of nature in which there is no NA. Lacking this clarification, Hasker's model as it is currently formulated does not sufficiently secure NA."

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Doctrine of Divine Simplicity

- What is it?
- James E. Dolezal
- "It is formally articulated apophatically as God's lack of parts and denies that he is physically, logically, or metaphysically composite."
- "According to the classical theism of Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas and their adherents, God is radically unlike creatures and cannot be adequately understood in ways appropriate to them. God is simple in that God transcends every form of complexity and composition familiar to the discursive intellect. One consequence is that the simple God lacks parts." (SEP Divine Simplicity Entry)

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Augustine on Divine Simplicity

- On the Trinity, Book 6
- "But for God it is the same thing to be as to be powerful or just or wise or anything else that can be said about his simple multiplicity or multiple simplicity to signify his substance...God however is indeed called in multiple ways great, good, wise, blessed, true, and anything else that seems not to be unworthy of him; but his greatness is identical with his wisdom (he is not great in mass but in might), and his goodness is identical with his wisdom and greatness, and his truth is identical with them all; and with him..."

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Thomas Aquinas on Divine Action

- Summa Contra Gentiles Book 2
- “His action is His being...God’s action is His substance...the manifold actions ascribed to God, as intelligence, volition, the production of things, and the like, are not so many different things, since each of these actions in God is His own very being, which is one and the same thing.”

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Divine Simplicity Simplified

- Everything in God IS God
- Is of identity used
- Imagine an = sign between all states of the form God is X
- God is all-knowing
- God is all-powerful
- God is all-good
- All of God's attributes identical to each other and identical to His essence
- All of His actions are identical to each other
- Only one divine act that is identical to His essence

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Divine Simplicity in Catholicism

- Fourth Lateran Council 1215
- "We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immeasurable, almighty, unchangeable, incomprehensible and ineffable, Father, Son and holy Spirit, three persons but one absolutely simple essence, substance or nature. The Father is from none, the Son from the Father alone, and the holy Spirit from both equally, eternally without beginning or end; the Father generating, the Son being born, and the holy Spirit proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, co-omnipotent and coeternal…"
- Considered Catholic dogma

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Divine Simplicity in Catholicism Cont

- Aquinas' account slightly different than Scotus'
- John Duns Scotus allows for a formal distinction
- Virtual distinction
- Formal distinction
- Real Distinction

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Divine Simplicity in Protestantism

- Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 2
- “There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible…”
- Wasn’t an issue during the Protestant Reformation
- Much of Reformed dogma was simply assumed and taken from the Catholic Church

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Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology

- "The unity of God may be defined as follows: God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times. This attribute of God has also been called God's simplicity, using simple in the less common sense of "not complex" or "not composed of parts." Rather, we must remember that God's whole being includes all of his attributes: he is entirely loving, entirely merciful, entirely just, and so forth. Every attribute of God that we find in Scripture is true of all of God's being, and we therefore can say that every attribute of God also qualifies every other attribute."

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Modern Protestant Dissent

- The doctrine of divine simplicity has come under attack by modern Protestant philosophers
- Alvin Plantinga, William Lane Craig, Ryan Mullins, etc
- Claim that the doctrine is not Biblical
- Claim that the doctrine is illogical
- Claim that the doctrine is inconsistent with the Trinity
- Claim the the doctrine entails “modal collapse”

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William Lane Craig on Divine Simplicity

- https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/divine-simplicity-2021
- "Such a doctrine is so unbiblical—not merely in the sense that it is not taught in the Bible, but in the sense that it is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which instructs us that God is loving, personal, holy, almighty, eternal, and so on and so on—, that one wonders how any biblical Christian could be attracted to so pernicious a doctrine. Thomas' God is more like the ineffable Absolute of Hinduism, which is also without distinctions, than the God of the Bible, Who reveals Himself to us as this and not that."

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Gregory Palamas 1296-1359

- Orthodox saint known for crystalizing the essence-energy distinction
- The Triads
- “There are, however, energies of God which have a beginning and an end, as all the saints will confirm. Our opponent...thinks that everything which has a beginning is created; this is why he has stated that only one reality is unoriginate, the essence of God, adding that "what is not this essence, derives from a created nature." But even if this man considers that everything that has a beginning is created, we for our part know that while all the energies of God are uncreated, not all are without beginning…

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Gregory Palamas Cont

- … Indeed, beginning and end must be ascribed, if not to the creative power itself, then at least to its activity, that is to say, to its energy as directed towards created things. Moses showed this, when he said, "God rested from all the works which He had begun to do. How then would the Superessential One not be different from its proper energy? But, he asks, are the unoriginate energies identical with the Superessential One? There are among them some which have an end but not a beginning, as Basil the Great has said concerning the prescience of God. The superessential essence of God is thus not to be identified with the energies, even with those without beginning; from which it follows that it is not only transcendent to any energy whatsoever, but that it transcends them "to an infinite degree and an infinite number of times", as the divine Maximus says."

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Aquinas vs. Palamas

- Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Part 3, Question 2
- “On the contrary, Whatever has a beginning in time is created.”
- Gregory Palamas, The Triads
- “Our opponent...thinks that everything which has a beginning is created…”
- Direct contradiction between the two thinkers on this question

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Trinity and Divine Simplicity

- The Trinity seems to be in direct conflict with divine simplicity
- The Father, Son, and Spirit are not identical to each other
- Is the Father identical to the divine essence?
- How could the Father and Son be identical to the divine essence and yet not identical to each other?
- Distinction between persons and the essence cannot be merely virtual
- Distinction between persons and each other cannot be merely virtual

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Ryan Mullins on Divine Simplicity

- Mullins claims the Trinity is incompatible with divine simplicity
- He also connects its rejection to Islamic thinkers
- Simply Impossible: A Case Against Divine Simplicity
- "A common claim amongst contemporary theologians is that Christians must choose either the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of divine simplicity. Interestingly, Islamic thinkers in the Middle Ages argued in a similar fashion against the doctrine of the Trinity."

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Divine Simplicity and Divine Processions

- Divine simplicity seems to be at odds with the doctrine of divine processions
- Recall that all of God's acts are identical to each other such that there is only one divine act
- The Father's act of begetting the Son cannot be identical to His act of procession of the Holy Spirit
- For Catholics and Protestants, the Son is the only-begotten from the Father alone
- Holy Spirit comes from the Father AND the Son
- For Orthodox generation and spiration are not identical acts

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Divine Simplicity and Divine Processions

- How can God only perform one act if the act of begetting and spiration are not identical?
- How can God only perform one act if the act of begetting and spiration are not identical to His act of creation?
- One act with different effects?

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Does God Have Intentions?

- Does God have an intention to create the world?
- If not, then God doesn't create the world intentionally
- No more design arguments
- Creates with intention then is His intention to create necessary or contingent?
- Do God's intentions ever fail?
- If necessary, then we have modal collapse
- If contingent, then divine simplicity is false
- Intention cannot be extrinsic as it is logically and explanatorily prior to creation

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Vladimir Lossky

- Great 20th century Orthodox theologian
- The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church
- “If we deny the real distinction between essence and energy, we cannot fix any very clear borderline between the procession of the divine persons and the creation of the world: both the one and the other will be equally acts of divine nature. The being and the action of God would then appear to be identical and as having the same character of necessity, as is observed by St Mark of Ephesus (fifteenth century)…

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Vladimir Lossky Cont

- We must then distinguish in God His nature, which is one; and three hypostases; and the uncreated energy which proceeds from and manifests forth the nature from which it is inseparable. If we participate in God in His energies, according to the measure of our capacity, this does not mean that in His procession ad extra God does not manifest Himself fully. God is in no way diminished in His energies; He is wholly present in each ray of His divinity."

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Doctrine of No Real Relations

- The doctrine of no real relations is related to divine simplicity and “classical theism”
- Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae Part 1, Question 28
- "As the creature proceeds from God in diversity of nature, God is outside the order of the whole creation, nor does any relation to the creature arise from His nature; for He does not produce the creature by necessity of His nature, but by His intellect and will, as is above explained (I:14:3 and I:14:4; I:19:8). Therefore, there is no real relation in God to the creature; whereas in creatures there is a real relation to God; because creatures are contained under the divine order, and their very nature entails dependence on God. On the other hand, the divine processions are in one and the same nature. Hence no parallel exists."

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Doctrine of No Real Relations Cont

- One motivation for the doctrine is divine immutability
- Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae Part 3, Question 2
- "Now, as was said above (I:13:7), every relation which we consider between God and the creature is really in the creature, by whose change the relation is brought into being; whereas it is not really in God, but only in our way of thinking, since it does not arise from any change in God."
- If God is really related to creatures, then that would be a new relation and change in God
- However, God cannot change in any respect. So, He cannot be really related to creatures

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Does God Really Love Us?

- If God is not really related to creatures, then how can He love us?
- I thought Christianity teaches that God loved us so much that He came to die for our sins?
- John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- 1 John 4:16 “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”
- 1 John 4:9-11 “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

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Does God Really Love Us? Cont

- 1 John 4:9-11 “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”
- Taken straightforwardly, this verse directly contradicts the doctrine of no real relations (NRR)
- It states that God loved us not that we loved Him
- NRR says that we love, but He doesn’t love us

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Aquinas Says God Does Love Us

- Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, First Part, Question 20
- "God loves all existing things. For all existing things, in so far as they exist, are good, since the existence of a thing is itself a good; and likewise, whatever perfection it possesses. Now it has been shown above (I:19:4) that God's will is the cause of all things. It must needs be, therefore, that a thing has existence, or any kind of good, only inasmuch as it is willed by God. To every existing thing, then, God wills some good. Hence, since to love anything is nothing else than to will good to that thing, it is manifest that God loves everything that exists."
- Is that really all that love is?

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Steven Nemes on DDS and God's Love

- "The proponent of divine simplicity who accepts that God cannot be really related to the world must therefore reinterpret these statements in such a way that they do not attribute to God any internal or intrinsic orientation toward the world in particular. Thus, God loves human beings in the sense that the things He causes are good for them…Statements about God are thus reinterpreted to be statements about the world that God has created. Anything that would have owed to a particular interior disposition or orientation on God's part toward the world has to be "cosmologized" and translated into a property of the world or cosmos that God has made. But it seems to me obvious that something is lost in translation here. For example, it is true that someone who loves me will bring about things that are good for me. But "love" means more than simply causing what is good for another…

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Steven Nemes on DDS and God's Love Cont

- A Critique of Divine Simplicity https://wordsoflife.substack.com/p/a-critique-of-divine-simplicity
- …Suppose I am wandering lost in the desert and an earthquake causes the ground to open up and fresh water to pool, saving me from death. The earthquake caused something that is good for me, but it can hardly be said to love me for that reason. What is missing is an element of intention. The earthquake does not mean to do good for me, and therefore it does not love me. In the same way, if God does not mean to do good for me, — and He cannot, if He cannot be particularly ordered toward me, — then it cannot be said that He loves me. At most He can be said to bear a formal resemblance to someone who does love me by way of the effects He produces, although the very thing that makes it to be love — namely, the positive intention to do good to me is missing from God as a matter of necessity…

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Steven Nemes on DDS and God's Love Cont

- …At most He can be said to bear a formal resemblance to someone who does love me by way of the effects He produces, although the very thing that makes it to be love — namely, the positive intention to do good to me…Thus, because God cannot be inwardly disposed toward the world on pain of modal collapse, the various statements that imply some kind of inward disposition in God have to be reinterpreted as statements about the world which God actualizes. But in this case, God can be said to "love" or "reward" or "punish" or "providentially guide" only in the sense that He bears a limited formal resemblance to someone who loves, rewards, punishes, or providentially guides by way of the effects He produces. The very thing that makes it to be love, or rewarding, or punishing, or providential guidance, on the other hand, — namely, intentional action, — is missing from God as a matter of principle."

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God's Love and NRR

- God's act of love is the same whether we exist or not
- Imagine telling your wife that your love for her is the same whether she exists or not
- If God is truly loving and merciful to His creation, then classical Christian theism is false
- It's quite ironic considering we are always told by missionaries that Jesus loves us so much
- However, if Jesus is God and God is not really related to His creation, then according to much of Christian tradition He cannot love us

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Allah's Love in the Qur'an

- Qur'an 85:14 "And He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Loving (Al-Wadud)."
- Qur'an 11:90 "Ask forgiveness from your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance: my Lord is merciful and most loving."
- Qur'an 60:7-8 "Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent,[1] and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."
- Qur'an 5:82 "And you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant."

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Sunni Orthodoxy on Divine Simplicity

- All 3 Sunni theological schools reject it (Ashari, Maturidi, and Athari)
- Shia schools hold to divine simplicity
- Allah has real attributes that are not identical to each other, nor are they identical to His essence
- The subsist in His essence and are inseparable from it

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Is the Trinity a Mystery?

- What is meant by the term mystery?
- Dale Tuggy identifies 5 uses of the term mystery in the literature
- 1. A truth formerly unknown, and perhaps undiscoverable by unaided human reason, but which has now been revealed by God and is known to some
- 2 Something we don't completely understand
- 3 Some fact we can't explain, or can't fully or adequately explain
- 4 An unintelligible doctrine, the meaning of which can't be grasped
- 5 A truth which one should believe even though it seems, even after careful reflection, to be impossible and/or contradictory and thus false.

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Negative Mysterianism

- Negative mysterians claim that the Incarnation is a mystery in the sense that it is an unintelligible doctrine, the meaning of which can't be grasped. Fourth meaning from previous slide.
- Dale Tuggy on negative mysterianism, "Opponents of this sort of mysterianism object to it as misdirection, special pleading, neglect of common sense, or even deliberate obfuscation. They emphasize that trinitarian theories are human constructs, and a desideratum of any theory is clarity. We literally can't believe what is expressed in trinitarian language, if we don't grasp the meaning of it, and to the extent that we don't understand a doctrine, it can't guide our other theological beliefs, our actions, or our worship."

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Positive Mysterianism

- Positive mysterians claim that the Trinity is a mystery in the sense that it is a truth which one should believe even though it seems, even after careful reflection, to be impossible and/or contradictory and thus false. Fifth meaning from previous slide
- Use quantum mechanics and other perceived apparent contradictions in the natural world as justification for accepting the view
- God's incomprehensibility is irrelevant to accepting apparent contradictions about God
- How does one know when something is an actual contradiction rather than an apparent one?

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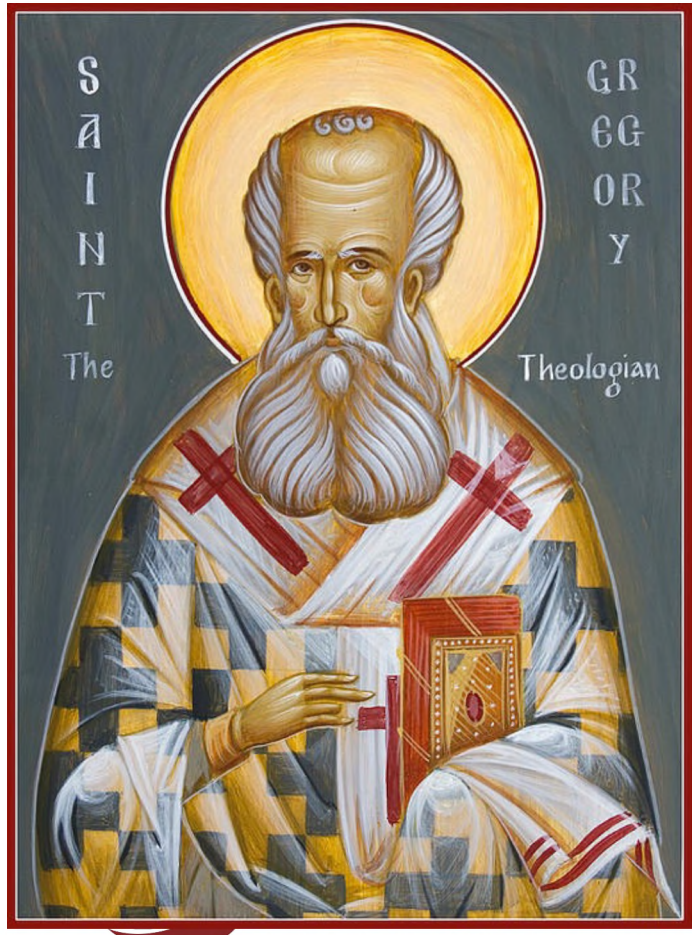
St. Gregory of Nazianzus On Mysterianism

- "So, in the end, I resolved that it was best to say "goodbye" to images and shadows, deceptive and utterly inadequate as they are to express that reality. I resolved to keep close to the more truly religious view and rest content with some few words, taking the Spirit as my guide and, in his company and in partnership with him, safeguarding to the end the genuine illumination I had received from him, as I strike out a path through this world. To the best of my powers I will persuade all men to worship Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the single Godhead and power, because to him belong all glory, honor, and might forever and ever. Amen." (Nazianzus, Oration 31, 143.)



James Anderson's Paradoxical Theology

- "The best-developed positive mysterian theory is that of James Anderson (2005, 2007), who develops Alvin Plantinga's epistemology so that beliefs in mysteries (merely apparent contradictions) may be rational, warranted, justified, and known. Orthodox belief about the Trinity, Anderson holds, involves believing, for example, that Jesus is identical to God, the Father is identical to God, and that Jesus and the Father are not identical. Similarly, one must believe that the Son is omniscient, but lacks knowledge about at least one matter. These, he grants, are apparent contradictions, but for the believer they are strongly warranted and justified by the divine testimony of scripture…

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James Anderson's Paradoxical Theology Cont.

- …He argues that numerous attempts by recent theologians and philosophers to interpret one of the apparently contradictory pairs in a way that makes the pair consistent always result in a lapse of orthodoxy (2007, 11–59). He argues that the Christian should take these trinitarian mysteries to be "MACRUEs", merely apparent contradictions resulting from unarticulated equivocations, and he gives plausible non-theological examples of these (220–5)."

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Anderson's Paradoxical Theology

- "My theory doesn't require me to identify positive reasons for God permitting or inducing MACRUEs. For even if I concede Tuggy's point that "the prior probability of God inducing MACRUEs in us is either low or inscrutable," the doctrine of [divine] incomprehensibility can still serve as…an undercutting defeater for the inference from D appears to be logically inconsistent to D is false."
- Anderson's argument is that they are apparent contradiction, but not actual ones even if he is unable to explain how

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Augustine on Knowledge of God

- On the Trinity Book 8
- "Yet unless we love him even now, we shall never see him. But who can love what he does not know? Something can be known and not loved; what I am asking is whether something can be loved which is unknown, because if it cannot then no one loves God before he knows him. And what does knowing God mean except to see (conspicere) him and firmly perceive (percipere) him with the mind? For he is not a body to be examined with the eyes in your head. But then to behold and perceive God as he can be beheld and perceived is only permitted to the pure in heart—"blessed are the pure in heart because they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8); so before we are capable of doing this, we must first love by faith, or it will be impossible for our hearts to be purified and become fit and worthy to see him…

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Augustine on Knowledge of God Cont

- …Where after all are those three things to be found which the whole gear of all the inspired books is set up to build in the human spirit; where are faith, hope, and charity to be found if not in the spirit that believes what it cannot yet see and hopes in and loves what it believes? So something can be loved which is unknown, provided it is believed. But naturally the spirit which believes what it does not see must be on its guard against fabricating something that does not exist, and thus hoping in and loving something false."

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Types of Predication

- When we predicate something true of God, what does it mean?
- Univocal—Term that has one meaning and is alike in all respects
- Analogical—Must have a univocal element to be analogous
- Equivocal-–Could have a completely different meaning
- God is omniscient (all-knowing)
- Humans have knowledge
- How is the word being used analogously unless there is a common element between the them?
- What about laysa kamithlihi shay (Qur'an 42:11)?

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Ibn Taymiyyah on Predication of God

- Ibn Taymiyyah on Reason and Revelation, Carl Sharif El-Tobgui
- “Ibn Taymiyya, for his part, insists that we are able to understand God’s attributes by virtue of their subsumption, alongside attributes present in our world, under a common meaning or notion (maʿnā). This, however, leads to a question. When Ibn Taymiyya says that we can only understand something if it possesses some resemblance to the created entities with which we are familiar, he explicitly uses the terms mushābaha and mumāthala, cognates of tashbīh and mithl (as in the verse “laysa ka-mithlihi shayʾ ”), respectively. How, then, does Ibn Taymiyya understand mushābaha and mumāthala here in a manner that does not violate the import of this verse? In answer to this question, he maintains that there is no escaping (lā budda min) some element of commonality (qadr mushtarak) between any two existing entities, so we ought to be forthright in admitting this…

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Ibn Taymiyyah on Predication of God Cont

- …Denying this premise directly entails a denial of God's very existence since one could easily argue that if God is said to exist and we are said to exist, then this would entail tashbīh because the word "existence" is being applied equally to God and to us (al-ishtirāk fī ism al-wujūd). This is precisely why the Bāṭiniyya, according to Ibn Taymiyya's understanding (as we saw in chapter 3 absurdly, did they affirm His non-existence (thus violating the law of the excluded middle). But if there must be some element of commonality among all things that exist, including God and the created universe, where should we draw the line of acceptable overlap? At existence? At life, knowledge, and power? At mercy and retribution?

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Ibn Taymiyyah on Predication of God Cont

- …Ibn Taymiyya's decisive—distinction lies between any and all of the attributes of God and the attributes of created things. There is indeed "nothing like unto Him" since He alone, along with all His qualities, is necessary, eternal, perfect, and so on. It is in this crucial respect, and not in any other, that there is no similarity (mushābaha) or likeness (mumāthala)—that is, no ontologically relevant similarity or likeness—between God and anything else. Nevertheless, there is (and necessarily so) a type of resemblance between God and creation on the purely abstract level of universal meanings (maʿānī), without which, once more, we would have no comprehension whatsoever of anything that is absent from our senses.

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Importance of Knowing Who You Worship

- John 4:22 “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”
- Do you know who you’re worshipping?
- Qur’an 17:36 “And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.”
- Danger of not knowing who you worship can lead to shirk

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Do Muslims Fully Understand God?

- No, of course not!
- However, what we do claim about God should be accurate
- The argument is not: The Trinity is false because we cannot fully understand it
- The problems arise from positive claims about the divine, not from what you don't claim about God
- Remember the LPT arises from Christianity's positive claims about God

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Dangers of Falsely Attributing to God

- This warning is repeated several times throughout the Qur'an
- Qur'an 11:18 "And who is more unjust than he who invents a lie about Allah? Those will be presented before their Lord, and the witnesses will say, "These are the ones who lied against their Lord." Unquestionably, the curse of Allah is upon the wrongdoers."
- Qur'an 10:17 "So who is more unjust than he who invents a lie about Allah or denies His signs? Indeed, the criminals will not succeed."

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Jc Beall's Contradictory Theology

- Beall like Anderson believes that all attempts to alleviate the apparent contradictions in Christian theology have failed
- However, unlike Anderson who believes the contradictions are merely apparent, Beall believes they are actual contradictions
- Even though they are contradictions, they are true!
- Dialetheism is the view that there are sentences such that A and not A are true simultaneously
- Liar's paradox
- Beall applies dialetheism to both the Trinity and incarnation

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Jc Beall's Contradictory Theology Cont

- The Contradictory Christ
- "What Richard Cross famously dubbed 'the fundamental problem of christology' – enjoys a long, fascinating history; and the quest continues in full force up through today. But I believe that the quest should end. I believe that christian thinkers should accept the contradiction of Christ. Christ is a contradictory being. So goes the central thesis of this book. At the crux of christian theology is a contradiction: namely, Christ Jesus is a being of whom some claims are both true and false. That's it."

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Jc Beall's Contradictory Theology Cont

- An example of what Beall means by this…
- "The simple thesis of this book is that some claims are both true and false of Christ – full stop, no new meanings, no playing with words. A witness to the contradictory truth of Christ is the familiar conclusion of the familiar fundamental problem of christology (Cross, 2011):
- 1. Christ is human. [Given]
- 2. Christ is divine. [Given]
- 3. Christ is mutable. [1: human nature entails mutability]
- 4. Christ is immutable. [2: divine nature entails immutability] So, by logic, (3) and (4) entail that Christ is both mutable and immutable."

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Problems for Beall's View

- There doesn't seem to be historical precedence for this view
- Makes it difficult to evangelize
- Intellectual stalemate
- If something is contradictory, then I'm justified in rejecting it
- Jumps from linguistic puzzles to contradictions being instantiated in metaphysical reality
- Not just any reality, but God Himself
- On what basis does one embrace true contradictions?

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From Anderson to Beall to…

- Like Anderson and Beall I take orthodox Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and Incarnation to appear contradictory
- Similar to Beall, I take them to be actual contradictions instead of merely apparent ones like Anderson claims
- However, unlike Beall I take these doctrines to be false because they are contradictory
- This is because I don't think true contradictions can be instantiated in reality and certainly not with respect to God
- Recent conversation between Beall and Anderson (Is Christ's Nature Contradictory) : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQHOcubDs6E

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The Trinity and General Revelation

- General/natural revelation—What can be known of God through reason and observing nature alone
- This is common to everyone with properly functioning faculties
- Special revelation—Found in scripture, miracles, or personal experience
- Not always available to everyone
- Can the Trinity be known through general revelation?

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The Trinity and General Revelation Cont

- Historically it was held that the Trinity could only be known through special revelation
- Through scripture, the incarnation, etc
- Not through reason alone or mere natural observation

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Thomas Aquinas Answers the Question

- Summa Theologiae, Part 1, Question 32
- “On the contrary, Hilary says (De Trin. i), "Let no man think to reach the sacred mystery of generation by his own mind."
  And Ambrose says (De Fide ii, 5), "It is impossible to know the secret of generation. The mind fails, the voice is silent." But the trinity of the divine persons is distinguished by origin of generation and procession (I:30:2. Since, therefore, man cannot know, and with his understanding grasp that for which no necessary reason can be given, it follows that the trinity of persons cannot be known by reason.”

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Thomas Aquinas Answers the Question Cont

- "I answer that, It is impossible to attain to the knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason. For, as above explained (I:12:4 and I:12:12), man cannot obtain the knowledge of God by natural reason except from creatures. Now creatures lead us to the knowledge of God, as effects do to their cause. Accordingly, by natural reason we can know of God that only which of necessity belongs to Him as the principle of things, and we have cited this fundamental principle in treating of God as above (I:12:12). Now, the creative power of God is common to the whole Trinity; and hence it belongs to the unity of the essence, and not to the distinction of the persons…

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Thomas Aquinas Answers the Question Cont

- …Therefore, by natural reason we can know what belongs to the unity of the essence, but not what belongs to the distinction of the persons. Whoever, then, tries to prove the trinity of persons by natural reason, derogates from faith in two ways. Firstly, as regards the dignity of faith itself, which consists in its being concerned with invisible things, that exceed human reason; wherefore the Apostle says that "faith is of things that appear not" (Hebrews 11:1), and the same Apostle says also, "We speak wisdom among the perfect, but not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery which is hidden" (1 Corinthians 2:6-7)…

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Thomas Aquinas Answers the Question Cont

- ...Secondly, as regards the utility of drawing others to the faith. For when anyone in the endeavor to prove the faith brings forward reasons which are not cogent, he falls under the ridicule of the unbelievers: since they suppose that we stand upon such reasons, and that we believe on such grounds. Therefore, we must not attempt to prove what is of faith, except by authority alone, to those who receive the authority; while as regards others it suffices to prove that what faith teaches is not impossible. Hence it is said by Dionysius (Div. Nom. ii): "Whoever wholly resists the word, is far off from our philosophy; whereas if he regards the truth of the word"—i.e. "the sacred word, we too follow this rule."

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Gregory of Nazianzus

- The Trinity is a mystery
- “The mystery of the Trinity is made manifest: therefore it must be freely absorbed by [each person]. Each must penetrate the mystery until ‘that which has been desired for us has been completely revealed.”
- What does the term mystery mean according to scripture?

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Definition of Mystery in the Bible

- A mystery is a truth, which was previously hidden and now has been revealed
- Daniel 2:19 “Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”
- Romans 16:25-26 “Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages, but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith…”

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Definition of Mystery in the Bible Cont

- Ephesians 3:3 "…how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

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Trinity Contradicts General Revelation

- Trinity cannot be known through reason, intuition, or natural observations alone
- Not only that, it also contradicts general revelation (GR) itself
- Through general revelation we can know that God exists
- We know the creator has qualities such as power, knowledge, will, necessity, etc
- One important quality that we know through GR is aseity
- Aseity—existence through oneself as opposed to through another (ab alio)
- God is independent and self-sufficient

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How Do We Know God is A Se?

- Summa Theologiae, Part 1, Question 2
- Aquinas' second way: "The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause. In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect…

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How Do We Know God is A Se? Cont

- … Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God."

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How Do We Know God is A Se? Cont

- Summa Theologiae, Part 1, Question 2
- Aquinas' third way: "Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God."

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Implications of Aquinas' Arguments

- In Aquinas' second way, he calls the the first efficient cause "God"
- In Aquinas' third way he distinguishes between the uncaused cause, which is necessary in and of Himself as opposed to necessary through another (ab alio)
- In the Trinity, this description fits the Father alone
- The doctrine of divine processions entails the Father alone is the uncaused cause and necessary first principle
- The Son and Spirit are necessary, but necessary through another and caused by the Father

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Aquinas' Response

- Summa Theologiae, Part 1, Question 33
- The word "principle" signifies only that whence another proceeds: since anything whence something proceeds in any way we call a principle; and conversely. As the Father then is the one whence another proceeds, it follows that the Father is a principle…The Greeks use the words "cause" and "principle" indifferently, when speaking of God; whereas the Latin Doctors do not use the word "cause," but only "principle." The reason is because "principle" is a wider term than "cause"; as "cause" is more common than "element." For the first term of a thing, as also the first part, is called the principle, but not the cause.

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Aquinas' Response Cont

- Now the wider a term is, the more suitable it is to use as regards God (I:13:11), because the more special terms are, the more they determine the mode adapted to the creature. Hence this term "cause" seems to mean diversity of substance, and dependence of one from another; which is not implied in the word "principle." For in all kinds of causes there is always to be found between the cause and the effect a distance of perfection or of power: whereas we use the term "principle" even in things which have no such difference, but have only a certain order to each other; as when we say that a point is the principle of a line; or also when we say that the first part of a line is the principle of a line.

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Causation or Grounding Relation?

- Both early Eastern and Western fathers agree that there is an asymmetrical dependency relation between Father and Son
- Debate about whether grounding is a type of causation
- Grounding still is an asymmetrical dependency
- Augustine, On the Opinion of Dionysius 15
- "The Son has His being not of Himself but of the Father"
- Gregory of Nyssa
- On Not Three Gods "The principle of causality distinguishes, then, the Persons of the holy Trinity. It affirms that the one is uncaused, while the other depends on the cause."

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Joshua R. Sijuwade

- Grounding Eternal Generation
- “Metaphysical Grounding (hereafter, grounding or ground) is regularly characterised as a primitive expression of dependence, determination and/or explanation...the Father e-grounds the Son and the Spirit = the Son and the Spirit are directly-dependent on the Father in a manner that is analogous to causation, and which back an explanation for the Son and the Spirit existing as they do...(Asymmetry): If x grounds y, then y does not ground x.”
- So, at minimum even if the term causation is not used, there still is an asymmetrical dependence relation
- Son and Spirit are dependent upon the Father and not the other way around

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Fitrah of Tawheed

- The Trinity cannot be known through general revelation
- Trinity also contradicts general revelation
- Fitrah—natural constitution which urges humans to recognize God, to know Him, and to worship Him
- Qur'an 30:30 "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah . That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know."
- We can know Allah through the fitra, rational arguments, and natural observation alone
- Special revelation enhances this knowledge

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Is the Trinity Necessary?

- Going against the grain of tradition of the Trinity being a mystery (revealed doctrine), some have proposed arguments for the necessity of the Trinity
- Some of these arguments are found amongst the laity
- Other arguments can be found in scholarly literature
- Argument from loneliness
- Argument from the problem of the one and the many
- The Richard argument

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Argument From Loneliness

- If there are not multiple persons in God from eternity past, then God would be lonely
- It would be torture for God to be lonely
- So, there must be multiple persons in the "Godhead"
- Argument from laity…Not taken seriously amongst scholarship
- Qur'an 2:267 "And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy."
- Assumption based on human psychology
- God is free of need
- Humans are created weak and in need
- Qur'an 4:28 "And Allah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak."

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Problem of the One and the Many

- Ancient philosophical "problem" describing the push and pull between unity and diversity
- The Trinity uniquely solves the problem of the one and the many
- One God (one), three persons (many)
- Argument made by the laity
- Not taken seriously by scholarship
- Traces back to Cornelius Van Til
- Allah is one God (one), multiple attributes (many)
- So, now the difference is between persons and attributes
- How does many persons have more explanatory power than many attributes?

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The "Richard" Argument

- What is it?
- Dale Tuggy, Antiunitarian Arguments from Divine Perfection
- "In recent times it has become fashionable in some Christian circles to argue that only a triune god—or at least, only a multipersonal god—can be perfect. It is alleged that necessarily, any unipersonal God must be imperfect. Thus, any theology on which God is a single self and yet is perfect, is incoherent. If you want to believe in a perfect god, on this way of thinking, you must abandon your Jewish, unitarian Christian, or Islamic concept of God as a great self."

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The Richard "Argument" Cont

- Why is it called the "Richard" Argument?
- "This type of argument was first made by Richard of St. Victor (fl. 1160) (Richard 2011), and versions of it have been developed anew by Richard of Oxford (b. 1934) (Swinburne 1994, 2008, 2018) and following his lead by some other Christian analytic philosophers (Morris 1991; Davis 1999, 2006; Craig n.d., Moreland and Craig 2017; Layman 2016).1 Now, in simplified form, such arguments are spread abroad by a host of preachers, apologists, and popular authors (e.g. Reeves 2012)."

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The “Richard” Argument Formulized

- P1. Necessarily, God is perfectly loving. premise
- P2. Necessarily, being perfectly loving entails actually loving another.
- P3. Necessarily, any other God loves is either within God or is part of God’s creation.
- P4. Necessarily, God was free not to create.
- P5. Necessarily, this object of love isn’t part of God’s creation. P4
- P6. Therefore, necessarily, God must have another within him to love. P3, P4, P5
- P7. Therefore, necessarily, it is not the case that God is unipersonal (that God P6 is a single self).

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Parody of the "Richard" Argument

- P1. Necessarily, God is perfectly forgiving. premise
- P2. Necessarily, being perfectly forgiving entails actually forgiving another. premise
- P3. Necessarily, any other God forgives is either within God or is part of premise God's creation.
- P4. Necessarily, God was free not to create. premise
- P5. Necessarily, this one who is forgiven isn't part of God's creation. P4
- P6. Therefore, necessarily, God must have another within him to forgive. P3, P4, P5
- P7. Therefore, necessarily, someone within God has done something P6 requiring forgiveness.

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Problems with the "Richard" Argument

- P2 is false
- Possession of an attribute or character trait doesn't necessitate expression of it
- Possession doesn't entail expression
- If it does, then God is not perfectly forgiving
- Assumes a three-self trinitarian view akin to social trinitarianism
- Three consciousnesses with intent of loving one another
- Why only three persons?
- Problem of infinite amount of persons

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Where's the Contradiction?

- "Rather, it's generated in part by the assumption that, in Thomas Morris's words: "surely, in order to be a fully loving person, an individual must extend his or her love beyond the bounds of self alone." But to the contrary, it seems possible for there to be a perfectly loving self who does not cause there to be another to love. No contradiction has been shown to follow from such a scenario. It's not clear, then, that there is a problem here which needs to be solved by a theory that God is multipersonal." Dale Tuggy

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Ryan Mullins on the "Richard" Argument

- "Hasker notes that this argument is not a proof. Instead, he refers to it as a plausibility argument. The intent of the argument is to make it plausible why there could be three persons. Unfortunately for Hasker, the Richard Argument is incredibly unpersuasive, for it does little to establish the plausibility of the claim that perfect love must consist of three divine persons. Consider the case of a single personed God whose adequate object of love is Himself. Is there anything imperfect about this? The self-love of a perfect being is not obviously imperfect since the object of its love is perfect. Further, the self-love of a perfect being would be proportionate to the worthiness of the object. We often consider love to be imperfect if the love directed towards the object of the beloved is disproportionate with the worthiness of the object. (E.g. when a person loves money more than people.) In the case of divine self-love, the object of the beloved is in perfect proportion to the worthiness of the object...

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Mullins on the "Richard" Argument

- …So it is not obvious that divine love must generate more divine persons in order to be perfect. Nor is it persuasive that the divine love must stop at three persons. The claim from Hasker is that adding a fourth person would not be of any great gain to perfecting divine love. Surely that is not obvious. Assume that each divine person is of infinite value, and that each divine person offers perfect love. It would seem that adding another perfect being — an object of infinite value and love — would be a pretty big benefit. The benefit would be infinite. It would seem that an infinite benefit should persuade the Father, the fount of divinity, to eternally generate more than two divine persons. If the gain is infinite, it is difficult to discern why the Father should stop generating more divine persons at any point. So this plausibility argument is unpersuasive. It does not plausibly explain why perfect divine love must stop at three persons."

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Practical Dawah

- How to apply this information in dawah
- Ask questions before making arguments
- How to convey an argument
- How to stay on topic
- Simulation of conversations

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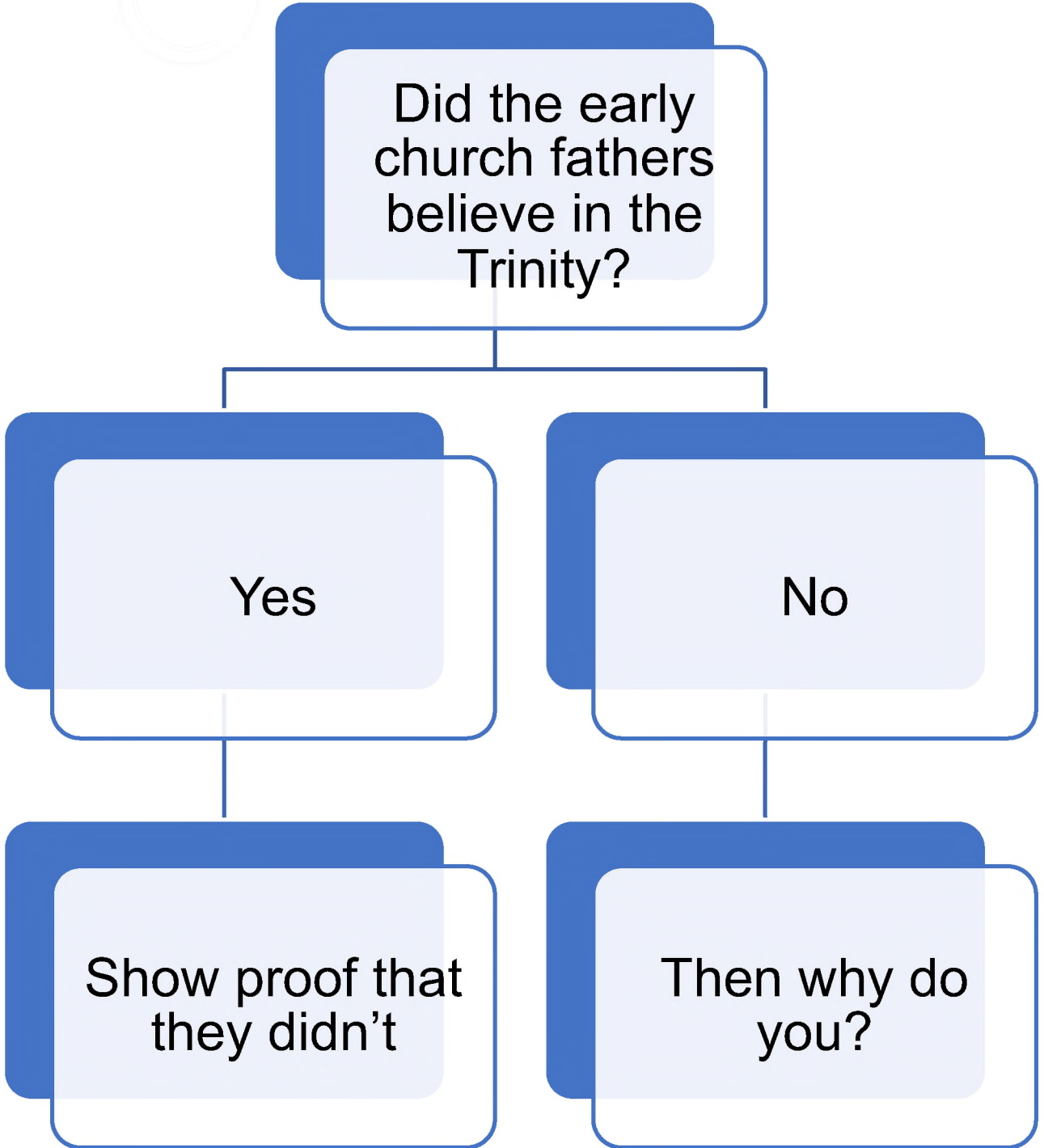
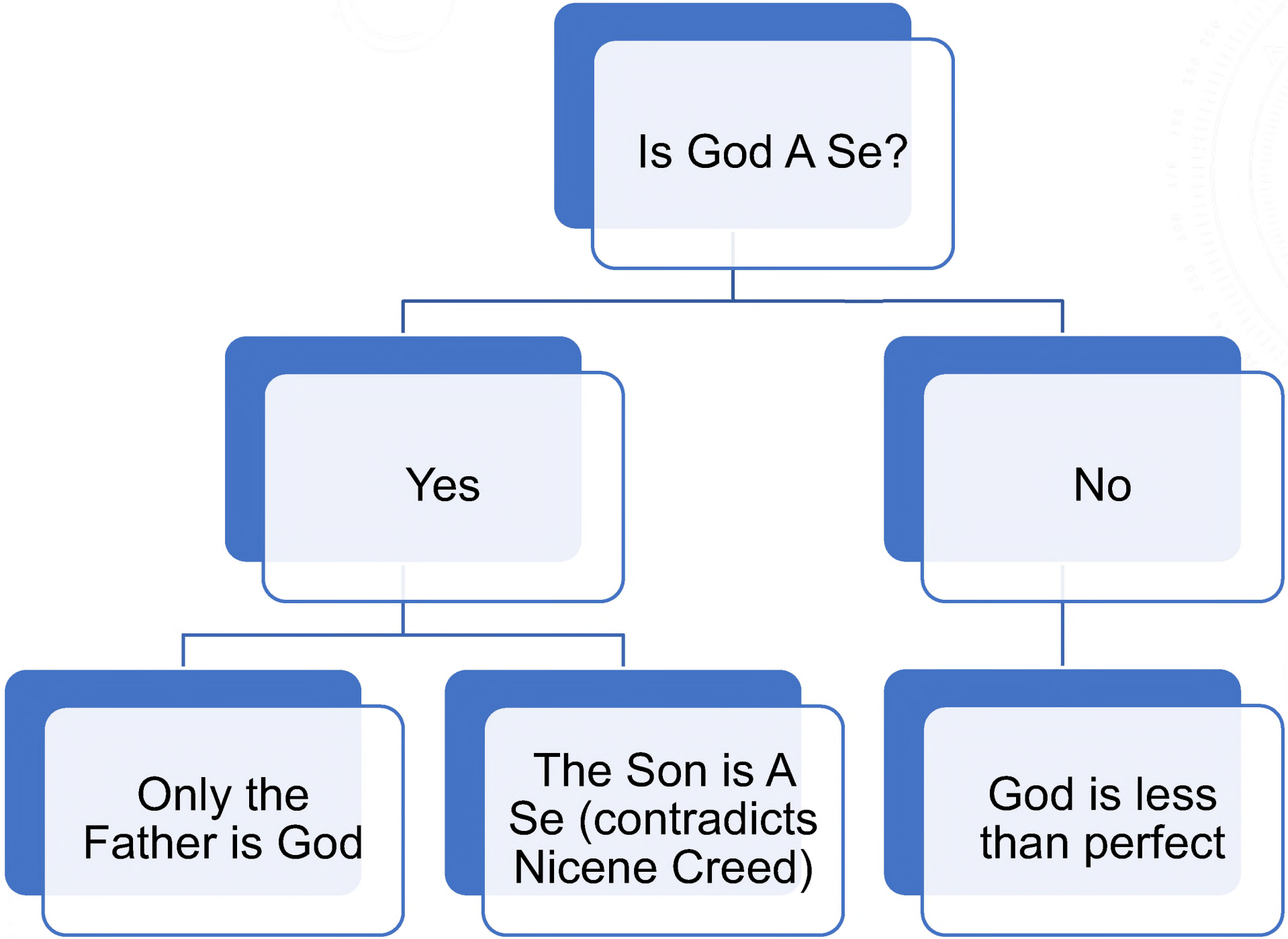
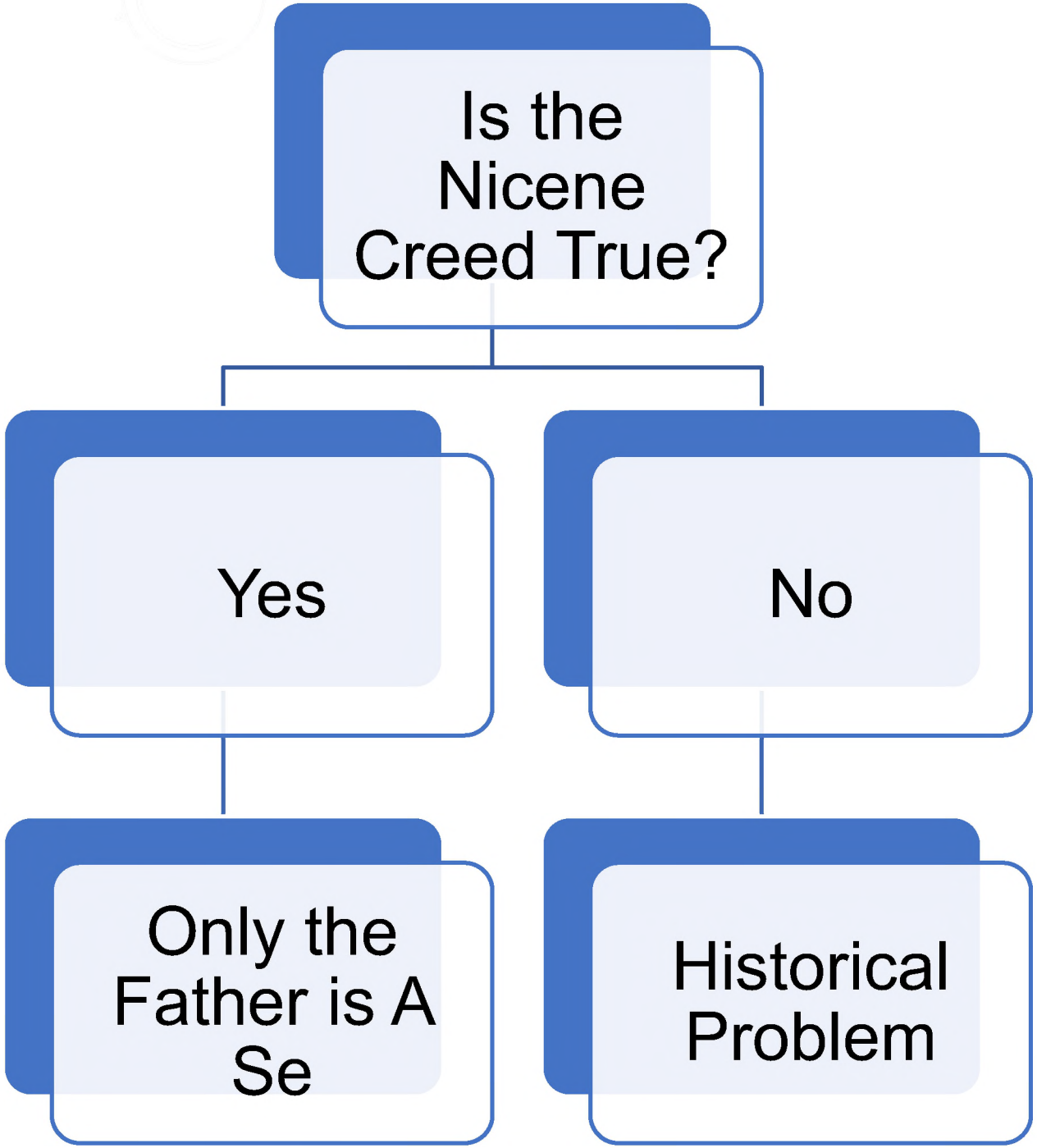
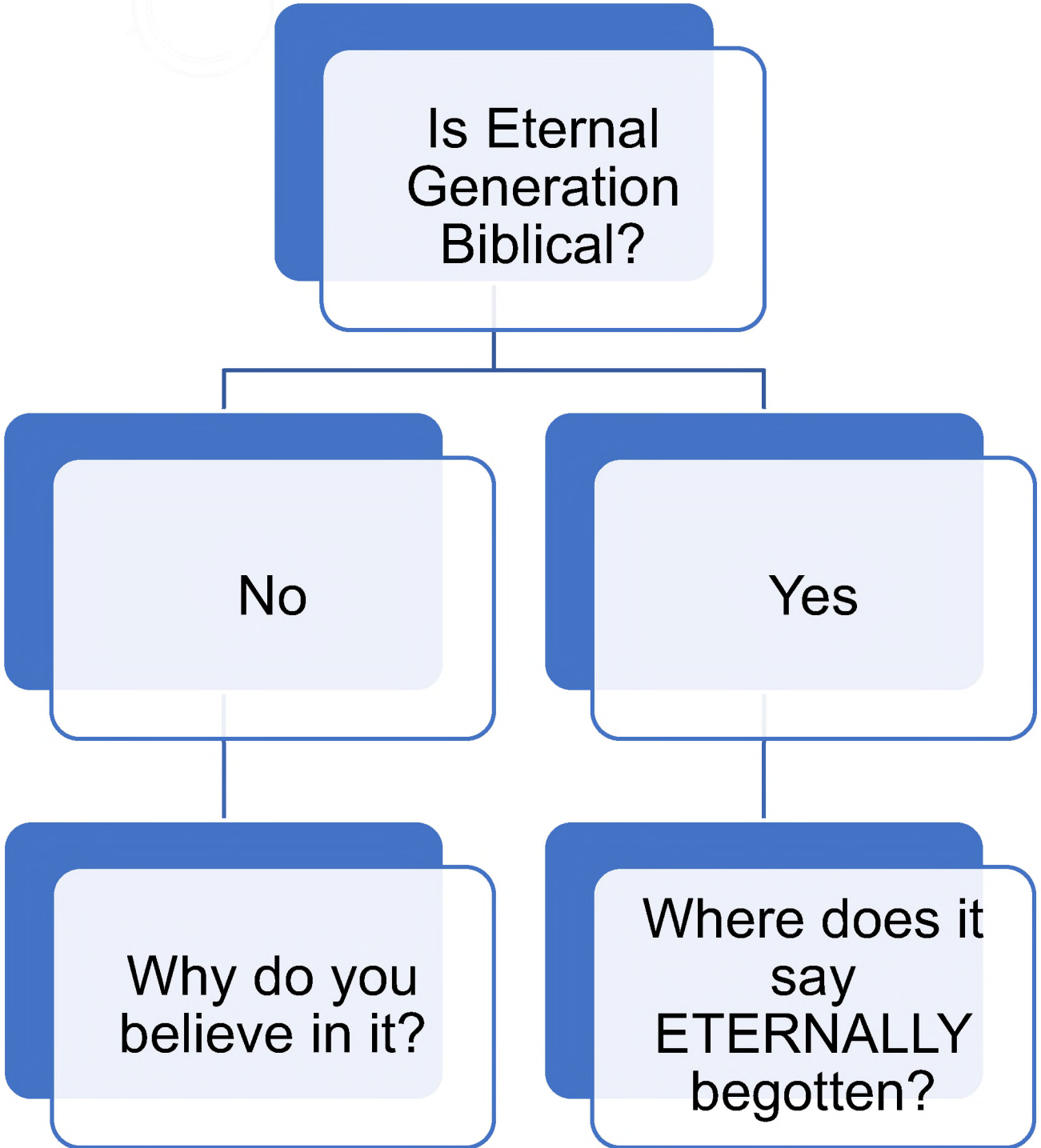
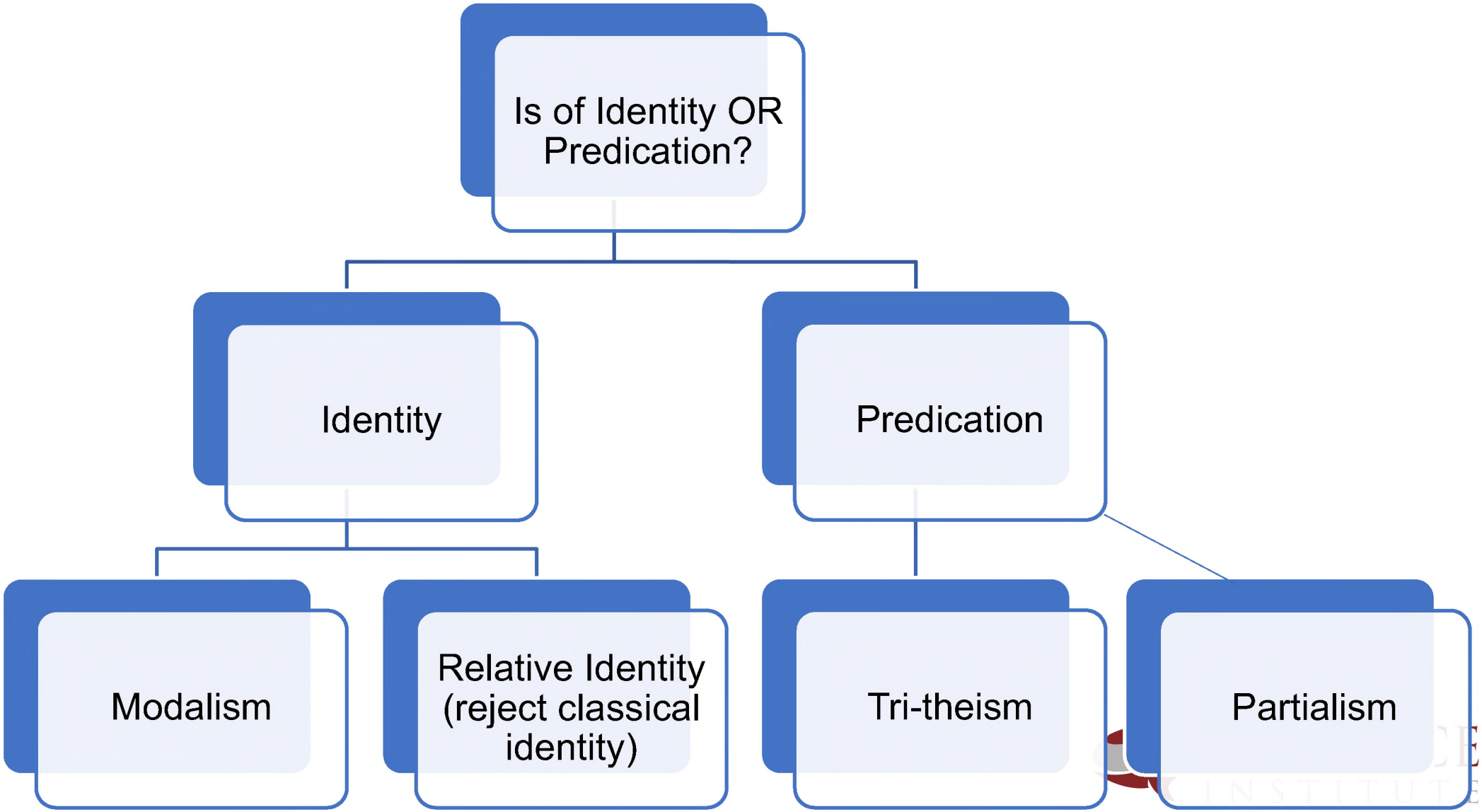

Did the early church fathers believe in the Trinity?
Yes
No
Show proof that they didn’t
Then why do you?

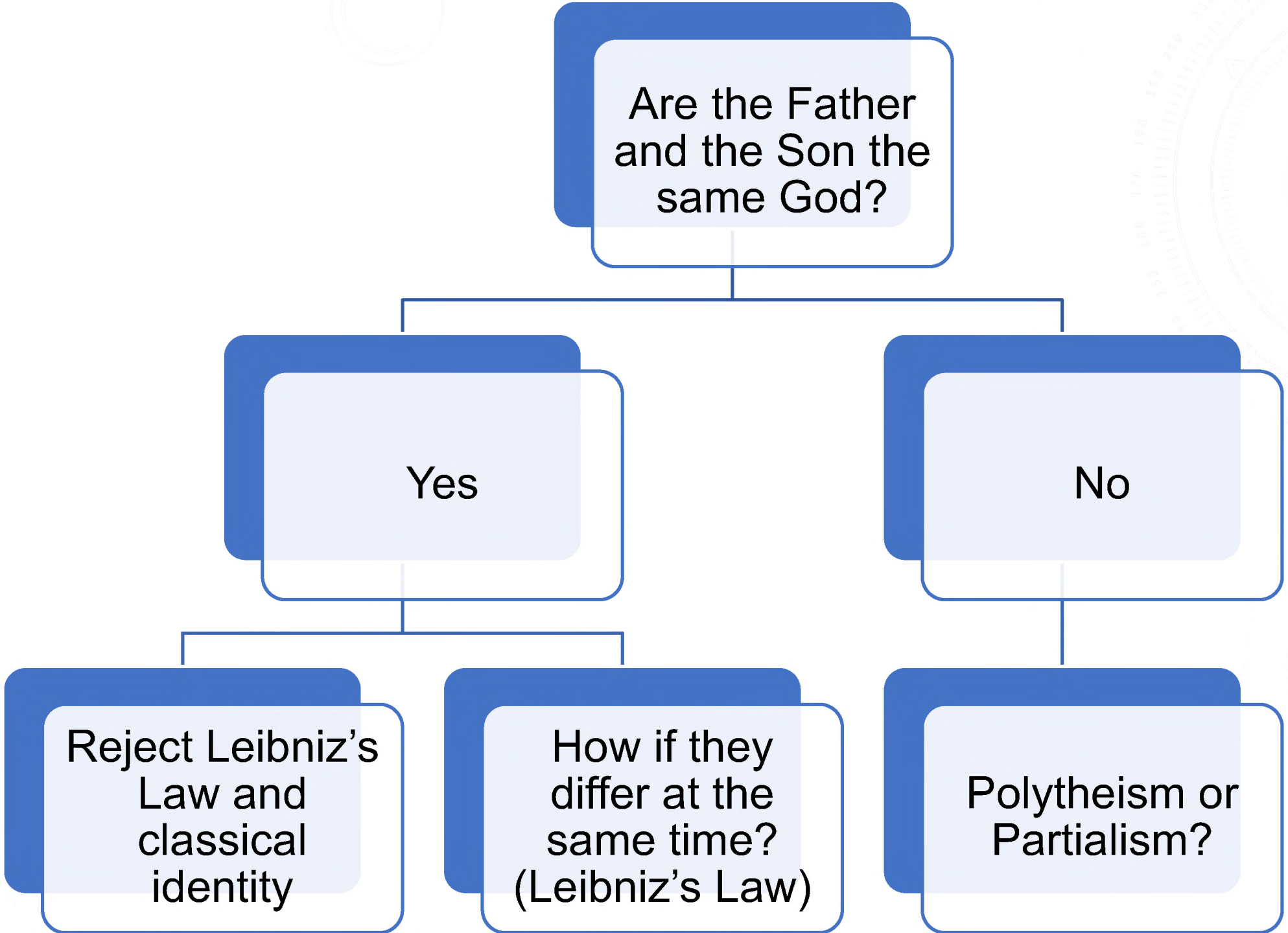

Is God A Se?
Yes
No
Only the Father is God
The Son is A Se (contradicts Nicene Creed)
God is less than perfect

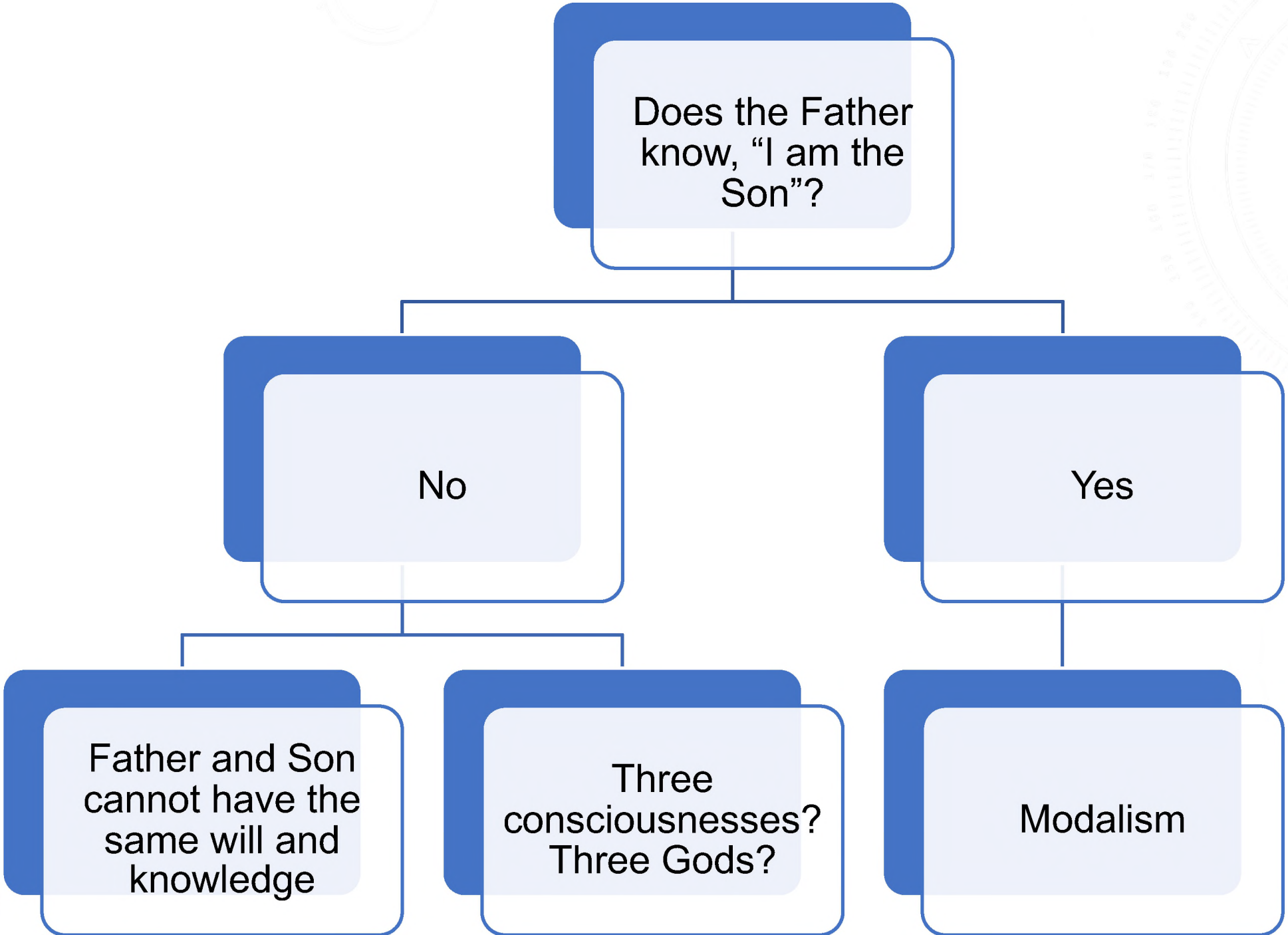

Is the Nicene Creed True?
Yes
No
Only the Father is A Se
Historical Problem

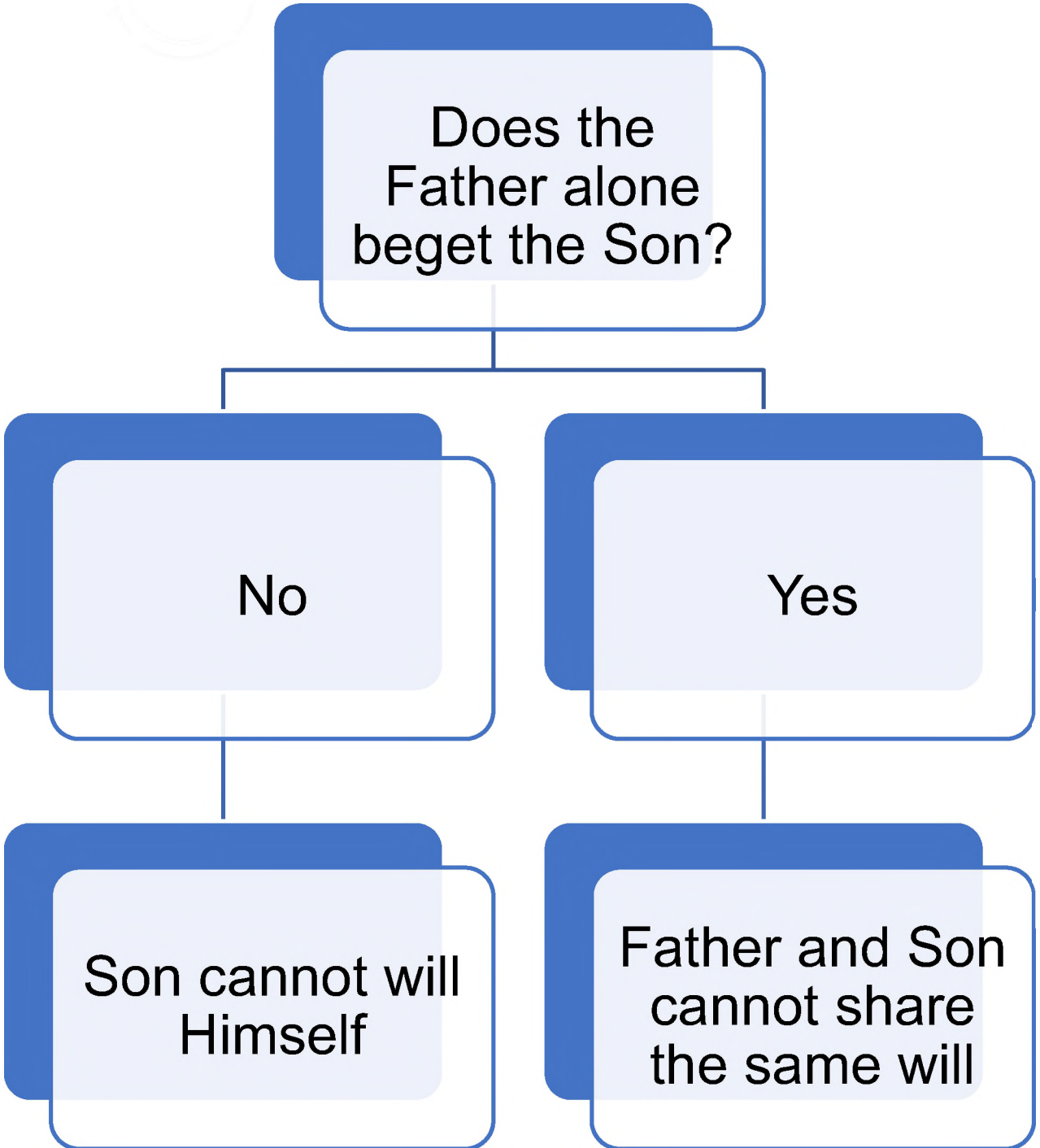

Is Eternal Generation Biblical?
No
Yes
Why do you believe in it?
Where does it say ETERNALLY begotten?

Father is God: Identity OR Predication?




Are the Father and the Son the same God?
Yes
No
Reject Leibniz's Law and classical identity
How if they differ at the same time? (Leibniz's Law)
Polytheism or Partialism?


Does the Father know, “I am the Son”?
No
Yes
Father and Son cannot have the same will and knowledge
Three consciousnesses? Three Gods?
Modalism


Does the Father alone beget the Son?
No
Yes
Son cannot will Himself
Father and Son cannot share the same will

Be Grateful for Islam

- Firm belief in Allah alone and the finality of the prophet Muhammad
- Follow the faith of the early generations
- Qur'an 14:34 "And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful."
- Qur'an 16:18 "And if you should count the favors of Allah , you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

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Summary of Course

- The Qur'an does not misrepresent the Trinity
- Neoplatonism influence the Trinity and early Christianity
- Council of Nicaea and 4th century dissent
- Status of ecumenical councils amongst Christian sects
- Common Trinitarian Heresies
- Doctrine of Divine Processions
- Motivation for divine processions (DDP)
- Filioque Controversy
- Is eternal generation Biblical?

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Summary of Course Cont.

- Testimony of early church Fathers on DDP
- Only the Father is A Se
- Aseity in the Qur'an
- Modern Protestant rejection of DDS
- Problems for Procession Deniers
- The Logical Problem of the Trinity
- Gregory of Nyssa on the problem
- Modern formulation of the LPT
- Is of identity vs. is of predication
- Classical vs. Relative Identity
- Problems with RIT

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Summary of Course Cont

- William Lane Craig's Trinity and its problems
- Social Trinitarianism and its problems
- One-self Trinity views and their problems
- Problem of indexicals
- Being/Person distinction "solution"
- Unity of Nature defense of monotheism and its problems
- Unity of Action defense of monotheism and its problems
- One-Will Trinity models and their problems
- Three-Will Trinity models and their problems
- Qur'anic Will Argument
- Divine Simplicity

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Summary of Course Cont

- Reception of divine simplicity in Christian tradition
- Modern Protestant dissent
- Gregory Palamas and DDS
- Trinity and DDS
- DDS and Divine Processions
- Doctrine of no real relations
- Does God really love us?
- Allah's love in the Qur'an
- Is the Trinity a Mystery?
- Anderson's Paradoxical Theology
- Types of predication

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Summary of Course Cont

- Importance of knowing who you worship
- Do Muslims fully understand God?
- Jc Beall's Contradictory Theology and its problems
- The Trinity cannot be known through general revelation
- Trinity contradicts general revelation
- God is A Se
- Fitrah of Tawheed
- Is the Trinity Necessary?
- The "Richard" argument and its problems

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